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**THE SOCIAL HISTORY
OF ART**

VOLUME ONE

ARNOLD HAUSER

THE
SOCIAL HISTORY
OF ART

VOLUME ONE

ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL

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CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC TIMES

1. OLD STONE AGE MAGIC AND NATURALISM

THE legend of the Golden Age is very old. We do not exactly know the sociological reason for reverence for the past; it may be rooted in tribal and family solidarity or in the endeavour of the privileged classes to base their privileges on heredity. However that may be, the feeling that what is old must be better is still so strong that art historians and archaeologists do not shrink even from historical falsification when attempting to prove that the style of art which appeals to them most is also the oldest. Some of them declare the art based on strictly formal principles, on the stylization and idealization of life, others that based on the reproduction and preservation of the natural life of things, to be the earliest evidence of artistic activity, according to whether they see in art a means of dominating and subjugating reality, or experience it as an instrument of self-surrender to nature. In other words, corresponding to their particular autocratic and conservative or liberal and progressive views, they revere either the geometrically ornamental art forms or the naturalistically imitative forms of expression as the older.¹ The monuments of primitive art that survive suggest quite clearly, anyhow, and with ever increasing force as research progresses, that naturalism has the prior claim, so that it is becoming more and more difficult to maintain the theory of the primacy of an art remote from life and nature.²

But the most remarkable thing about prehistoric naturalism is not that it is older than the geometric style, which makes so much more of a primitive impression, but that it already reveals

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all the typical phases of development through which art has passed in modern times and is not in any sense the merely instinctive, static, a-historical phenomenon which scholars obsessed with geometric and rigorously formal art declare it to be. This is an art which advances from a linear faithfulness to nature, in which individual forms are still shaped somewhat rigidly and laboriously, to a more nimble and sparkling, almost impressionistic technique. It is a process which shows a growing understanding of how to give the final optical impression an increasingly pictorial, instantaneous and apparently spontaneous form. The accuracy of the drawing rises to a level of virtuosity which takes it upon itself to master increasingly difficult attitudes and aspects, increasingly fleeting movements and gestures, increasingly bold foreshortenings and intersections. This naturalism is by no means a fixed, stationary formula, but a mobile and living form, which tackles the rendering of reality with the most varied means of expression and performs its task sometimes with lesser, sometimes with greater skill. The indiscriminately instinctive state of nature has long been left behind, but there is still a far journey yet to that state of culture in which rigid artistic formulae are created.

We are the more perplexed by what is probably the strangest phenomenon in the whole history of art, because there are no parallels whatever between this prehistoric art and child art or the art of most of the more recent primitive races. Children's drawings and the artistic production of contemporary primitive races are rationalistic, not sensory: they show what the child and the primitive artist know, not what they actually see; they give a theoretically synthetic, not an optically organic picture of the object. They combine the front-view with the side-view or the view from above, leave nothing out of what they consider worth knowing about the object, increase the scale of the biologically and practically important, but neglect everything, however impressive in itself, which plays no direct part in the context of the object. The peculiar thing about the naturalistic drawings of the Old Stone Age is, on the other hand, that they give the visual impression in such a direct, unmixed form, free from all intellectual trimmings or restrictions, that we have to wait until modern impressionism to find any parallels in later art. We discover

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motion studies which already remind us of modern instantaneous photographs, the like of which we do not find again until we come to the pictures of a Degas or a Toulouse-Lautrec, so that for the eye unschooled by impressionism there must appear to be something badly drawn and unintelligible about these pictures. The painters of the Palaeolithic age were still able to see delicate shades with the naked eye which modern man is able to discover only with the help of complicated scientific instruments. Such ability had already gone by the time of the New Stone Age when the directness of sensations had been replaced to some extent by the inflexibility and stability of conceptualism. But the Palaeolithic artist still paints what he actually sees, and nothing more than he can take in in one definite moment and in one definite sight of the object. He still knows nothing about the optical heterogeneousness of the various elements of the picture and rationalistic methods of composition, stylistic characteristics with which we are so familiar from children's drawings and the art of primitive races, nor does he know above all about the technique of composing a face from the silhouette in profile and the eyes *en face*. Palaeolithic art apparently takes possession without a fight of the unity of visual perception achieved by modern art only after a century-long struggle; it certainly improves its methods, but does not change them, and the dualism of the visible and the invisible, of the seen and the merely known, remains absolutely foreign to it.

What was the reason and purpose behind this art? Was it the expression of a joy of life insistent on being recorded and repeated? Or the satisfaction of the play-instinct and delight in embellishment—of the urge to cover empty surfaces with lines and forms, patterns and ornament? Was it the fruit of leisure or had it some definite practical purpose? Have we to see in it a play-thing or a tool, an opiate and a luxury or a weapon in the struggle for a livelihood? We know that it was the art of primitive hunters living on an unproductive, parasitic economic level, who had to gather or capture their food rather than produce it themselves; men who to all appearances still lived at the stage of primitive individualism, in unstable, almost entirely unorganized social patterns, in small isolated hordes, and who believed in no gods,

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in no world and life beyond death. In this age of purely practical life everything obviously still turned around the bare earning of a livelihood and there is nothing to justify us in assuming that art served any other purpose than a means to the procuring of food. All the indications point rather to the fact that it was the instrument of a magical technique and as such had a thoroughly pragmatic function aimed entirely at direct economic objectives. This magic apparently had nothing in common with what we understand by religion; it knew no prayers, revered no sacred powers and was connected with no other-worldly spiritual beings by any kind of faith, and therefore failed to fulfil what has been described as the minimum condition of an authentic religion.⁹ It was a technique without mystery, a matter-of-fact procedure, the objective application of methods which had as little to do with mysticism and esoterism as when we set mouse-traps, manure the ground or take a drug. The pictures were part of the technical apparatus of this magic; they were the 'trap' into which the game had to go, or rather they were the trap with the already captured animal—for the picture was both representation and the things represented, both wish and wish-fulfilment at one and the same time. The Palaeolithic hunter and painter thought he was in possession of the thing itself in the picture, thought he had acquired power over the object in the portrayal of the object. He believed the real animal actually suffered the killing of the animal portrayed in the picture. The pictorial representation was to his mind nothing but the anticipation of the desired effect; the real event had inevitably to follow the magical sample-action, or rather to be already contained within it, as both were separated from each other merely by the supposedly unreal medium of space and time. It was, therefore, by no means a question of symbolical surrogatory functions but of really purposive action. It was not the thought that killed, not the faith that achieved the miracle, but the actual deed, the pictorial representation, the shooting at the picture, that effected the magic.

When the Palaeolithic artist painted an animal on the rock, he produced a real animal. For him the world of fiction and pictures, the sphere of art and mere imitation, was not yet a special province of its own, different and separate from empirical

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reality; he did not as yet confront the two different spheres, but saw in one the direct, undifferentiated continuation of the other. He will have had the same attitude to art as Lévy-Bruhl's Sioux Red Indian, who said of a research worker whom he saw preparing sketches: 'I know that this man has put many of our bisons into his book. I was there when he did it, and since then we have had no bisons.'⁴ The conception of this sphere of art as a direct continuation of ordinary reality never disappears completely despite the later predominance of a conception of art as something opposed to reality. The legend of Pygmalion, who falls in love with the statue which he has created, comes from this attitude of mind. There is evidence of a similar approach when the Chinese or Japanese artist paints a branch or a flower and the picture is not intended to be a summary and idealization, a reduction or correction of life, like the works of Western art, but simply one branch or blossom more on the tree of reality. Chinese anecdotes and fairy tales about artists' relation to their works and the relationship between picture and reality, appearance and being, fiction and life, convey the same idea—fairy tales in which it is related, for example, how the figures in a picture walk out through a gate into a real landscape, into real life. In all these examples the frontiers between art and reality are blurred, only in the art of historical times the continuity of the two provinces is a fiction within the fiction, whilst in the painting of the Old Stone Age it is a simple fact and a proof that art is still entirely in the service of life.

Any other explanation of Palaeolithic art, as, for example, decorative or expressive form, is untenable. A whole series of indications argues against such an interpretation, above all the fact that the paintings are often completely hidden in inaccessible, absolutely unilluminated corners of the caves where they would have been quite impossible as 'decorations'. Their palimpsest-like superposition, destroying any decorative effect from the very outset, also argues against such explanations. After all, the painters were not forced to paint their pictures one over the other. They had space enough. This very superposition of one picture over another points to the fact that the pictures were not created with any intention of providing the eye with aesthetic

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enjoyment but were in fulfilment of a purpose in which the most important element was that the pictures should be accommodated in certain caves and in certain specific parts of the caves—obviously in definite spots considered particularly suitable for magic. There could be no question of a decorative intention or of an urge to express or communicate aesthetic emotion, since the pictures were more hidden away than exhibited. There are in fact, as has been noted, two different motives from which works of art are derived: some are produced simply in order to exist, others to be seen.⁵ Religious art created purely to the honour of God, and more or less all works of art designed to lighten the burden that weighs on the artist's heart share this working in secret with the magical art of the Old Stone Age. The Palaeolithic artist who was intent solely on the efficacy of the magic will nevertheless have derived a certain aesthetic satisfaction from his work, even though he considered the aesthetic quality merely as a means to a practical end. The situation is mirrored most clearly in the relationship between mime and magic in the religious dances of primitive peoples. Just as in these dances the pleasure in make-believe and imitation is fused with the religiously motivated action, so the prehistoric painter will have depicted the animals in their characteristic attitudes with gusto and satisfaction, despite his surrender to the magical purpose of the painting.

The best proof that this art was concerned with a magical and not an aesthetic effect, at least in its conscious purpose, lies in the fact that the animals in these pictures were often represented as pierced by spears and arrows or were actually shot at with such weapons after the completion of the work. Doubtless this was a killing in effigy. That Palaeolithic art was connected with magical actions is finally proved by the representations of human figures disguised as animals of which the majority are obviously concerned with the performance of magical-miming dances. In these pictures we find—as for instance in Trois-Frères—combined animal masks which would be quite unintelligible without a magical intention.⁶ The connection of Palaeolithic painting with magic also helps us best to explain the naturalism of this art. A representation the aim of which was to

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create a double of the model, that is to say, not merely to indicate, imitate, simulate, but literally to replace, to take the place of, could not have been anything else but naturalistic. The animal which was to be conjured into life was intended to appear as the counterpart to the animal in the painting—but it could only come into existence if the copy was faithful and genuine. It was precisely the magic purpose of this art that forced it to be naturalistic. The picture which bore no resemblance to its object was not merely faulty but senseless and purposeless.

It is assumed that the magical age, the first in which we have evidence of works of art, was preceded by a pre-magical phase.⁷ The age of fully developed magic, with its fixed ritual and wonder-working technique already crystallized in formulae, must have been prepared for by an epoch of unregulated, groping practical activity and mere experimentation. The magical formulae had to prove themselves effective before they could be schematized. They cannot have been the result of mere speculation; they must have been found without conscious seeking, and been developed step by step. Pre-magical man probably discovered the connection between the copy and the original by accident, but this discovery must have had an overwhelming effect on him. Perhaps the whole sphere of magic, with its axiom of the mutual dependence of things similar, first grew out of this experience. The two basic ideas which, as has been emphasized, are the pre-conditions of art may have developed in the age of pre-magical experimentation and discovery, namely the idea of similarity and imitation, and the idea of producing something from nothing, in fact the very possibility of creative art.⁸ The hand silhouettes which have been found in many places near the cave paintings, and which apparently arose through the impress of actual hands, probably first gave man the idea of creating—of *poiein*—and made him aware of the possibility that something lifeless and artificial could be perfectly similar to the living and genuine original. This mere playing about had, of course, at first nothing at all to do with either art or magic; it had first to become an instrument of magic and could only then become a form of art. For the gap between these hand-impressions and even the most primitive animal representations of the Old Stone

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Age is so immense and there is such a complete lack of records of a possible transition between the two that we can hardly assume a direct and continuous development of art forms out of pure play forms, but must infer the existence of a connecting link coming from outside—and in all probability this will have been the magical function of the copy. Yet even those playful, pre-magical forms had a naturalistic tendency, imitating reality, however mechanically, and can in no way be considered the expression of an anti-naturalistic, decorative principle.

2. NEW STONE AGE ANIMISM AND GEOMETRISM

The naturalistic style prevailed until the end of the Palaeolithic age, that is to say, during a period of many thousands of years; no change took place until the transition from the Old to the New Stone Age, and this was the first stylistic change in the whole history of art. It was not until then that the naturalistic attitude, open to the full range of experience, yielded to a narrowly geometric stylization, in which the artist tended rather to shut himself off from the wealth of empirical reality. Instead of representations true to nature, with loving and patient care devoted to the details of the object, from now on we find everywhere schematic and conventional signs, indicating rather than reproducing the object, like hieroglyphs. Instead of the concreteness of actual living experience, art now tries to hold fast the idea, the concept, the inner substance of things—to create symbols rather than likenesses of the object. The Neolithic drawings merely indicate the human figure by two or three simple geometric patterns, as for instance by a vertical straight line for the body and two semicircles, one facing upwards, the other downwards, for the arms and legs. The Menhirs, in which some scholars have claimed to see abbreviated portraits of the dead,⁹ show an equally far-reaching abstraction in the modelling. On the flat stone surface of these 'tombs' the head, which is not similar to the natural shape even to the extent of being round, is separated from the body, that is, from the oblong of the stone

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itself, only by a stroke; the eyes are indicated by two dots; the nose is combined either with the mouth or the eyebrows in one simple geometric figure. A man is characterized by the addition of weapons, a woman by two hemispheres for the breasts.

The change in style which leads to these entirely abstract forms of art is conditioned by a general turning-point in culture and civilization which represents perhaps the deepest incision in the history of the human race. The material environment and the spiritual constitution of prehistoric man undergo such a thorough change at this time that everything that lies before it can easily appear to be merely animal and instinctive and everything that happens afterwards as a continuous, purposeful development. The decisive and revolutionary step consists in man's no longer living parasitically on the gifts of nature, no longer gathering and seizing his daily food but producing it for himself. With the domestication of animals and plants, with cattle-breeding and agriculture, he begins his triumph over and conquest of nature and makes himself to some extent independent of the vagaries of fate and chance. There begins the age of the organized supply of the material needs of life; man begins to work and to practise husbandry; he provides for future needs and cultivates the basic forms of capital. With these rudiments—the possession of arable land, domesticated animals, tools and food provisions—there is no doubt that the differentiation of society into strata and classes, into privileged and under-privileged, exploiters and exploited, also begins. The organization of labour, the division of functions, professional differentiation begin: cattle-rearing and cultivation of the land, primary production and handicraft, specialized trades and domestic crafts, male and female labour, farming and the defence of the land, all these gradually become separate.

With this transition from the stage of food-gathering and hunting to that of cattle-breeding and planting not only the content but the whole rhythm of life is changed. The nomadic hordes are transformed into settled communities; socially inarticulate and disintegrated groups yield to organized, locally amalgamated social bodies. Gordon Childe is quite right to warn us against seeing this change to settled community life as an all too precisely

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demarcated turning-point and thinks that, on the one hand, even the Palaeolithic hunter dwelt in the same cave sometimes probably for generations, and, on the other hand, that primitive land-economy and cattle-rearing were connected in the early stages with a periodical change of domicile, since fields and pasture became exhausted after a certain time.¹⁰ But one must not forget that, first, the exhaustion of the soil became more and more rare with improvement in agricultural techniques, and that, secondly, the farmer and the cattle-breeder, however short or long the time he stayed in one place, must have had a quite different relationship to his home, to the piece of land to which he felt himself attached, from that of the nomadic hunter, however regularly he returned to his cave. With this attachment to his home there developed a style of life completely different from the restless, unstable, piratical existence of Palaeolithic man. The new form of economy brought in its train, as opposed to the anarchic irregularity of food-gathering and hunting, a certain stability; in place of a planless economy of depredation, of just managing to exist from one day to the next, of living from hand to mouth, there now appears a planned economy, regulated for long periods in advance and prepared for various eventualities; the development moves from the stage of social disintegration and anarchy to that of co-operation, from the 'stage of the individual search for food'¹¹ to that of a collectivistic—though not necessarily communist—co-operative group-economy, to a society with common interests, common tasks, common undertakings; from the condition of unregulated power-relationships the individual groups develop into more or less centralized, more or less uniformly governed communities, from a centre-less existence with no settled institutions of any kind, to a life that revolves around home and farm, field and pasture, settlement and sanctuary.

Religious rites and acts of worship now took the place of magic and sorcery. The Palaeolithic age represented a phase marked by the absolute absence of worship-cults; man was full of the fear of death and starvation, endeavoured to defend himself against the assaults of enemies and material want, against pain and death by magic practices, but did not connect the good

and evil fortune which befell him with any power behind events. Not until he begins to breed plants and cattle does he also begin to feel that his fate is directed by powers endowed with reason and with the ability to determine human destiny. With the awareness of man's dependence on good and bad weather, on rain and sunshine, lightning and hail, plague and famine, on the fertility or infertility of the earth and abundance or meagreness of litters, arises the conception of all kinds of demons and spirits—beneficent and malignant—distributing blessings and curses, and the idea of the unknown and mysterious, of the higher powers, of huge, supramundane and numinous forces beyond human control. The world is divided into two halves; man himself seems divided into two halves. This is the phase of animism, of spirit-worship, of belief in the survival of the soul and the cult of the dead. With belief and worship, however, there arises also the need for idols, amulets, sacred symbols, votive offerings, burial gifts and burial monuments. The distinction between sacred and profane art, between an art of religious representation and the art of secular ornamentation, now appears. On the one hand, we find the remains of idols and of a sepulchral art, and, on the other, those of secular ceramics, with decorative forms, partly developed in fact, as Semper pointed out, directly from the spirit of handicraft and its techniques.

For animism the world is divided into a reality and a super-reality, a visible phenomenal world and an invisible world of spirits, a mortal body and an immortal soul. The burial customs and rites make it quite clear that Neolithic man was already beginning to conceive the soul as a substance divided from the body. The magic view of the world is monistic, it sees reality in the form of a simple texture, of an uninterrupted and coherent continuum; but animism is dualistic, it forms its knowledge and beliefs into a two-world system. Magic is sensualistic and holds fast to the concrete; animism is spiritualistic and inclines to abstraction. In the one case thought is centred on the life of this world, in the other on that of the world to come. That is the main reason why Palaeolithic art reproduces things true to life and reality, whilst Neolithic art opposes a stylized and idealized super-world to ordinary empirical reality.¹² But this is the beginning

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of the process of intellectualization and rationalization in art: the replacement of concrete pictures and forms by signs and symbols, abstractions and abbreviations, general types and conventional tokens; the suppression of direct phenomena and experiences by thought and interpretation, accentuation and exaggeration, distortion and denaturalization. The work of art is no longer purely the representation of a material object but that of an idea, not merely a reminiscence but also a vision; in other words: the non-sensory and conceptual elements of the artist's imagination displace the sensuous and irrational elements. And thus the picture is gradually changed into a pictographical sign-language, the pictorial abundance is reduced to a non-pictorial or almost non-pictorial shorthand.

In the final analysis, the Neolithic change of style is determined by two factors: first, by the transition from the parasitical, purely consumptive economy of the hunters and food-gatherers to the productive and constructive economy of the cattle-breeders and tillers of the soil; secondly, by the replacement of the monistic, magic-dominated conception of the world by the dualistic philosophy of animism, that is, by a conception of the world which is itself dependent on the new type of economy. The Palaeolithic painter was a hunter, and as such he had to be a good observer, he had to be able to recognize animals and their characteristics, their habitats and their migrations, from the slightest tracks and scents; he had to have a sharp eye for similarities and differences, a fine ear for signs and sounds; all his senses had to be directed outwards to concrete reality. The same attitude and the same qualities are also important in naturalism. The Neolithic peasant no longer needs the hunter's sharp senses; his sensitivity and gifts of observation decline; other talents—above all the gift of abstraction and rational thinking—attain importance both in his methods of production and in his formalistic, strictly concentrated and stylizing art. The most fundamental difference between this art and naturalism is that it represents reality not as a continuous picture of complete homogeneity, but as the *confrontation* of two worlds. With its formalistic urge, it opposes the normal appearance of things; it is no longer the imitator, but the antagonist of nature; it does not add a further

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continuation to reality, but opposes it with an autonomous pattern of its own. It is the dualism that came into the world with the animistic creed and has since found expression in hundreds of philosophical systems, which is expressed in this opposition of idea and reality, soul and body, spirit and form, and from which it is no longer possible to separate our conception of art. However much these opposing factors may displace each other from time to time, the tension between them is felt in every period of Western art—just as much in the formally rigorous as in the naturalistic periods.

The formalistic, geometrically ornamental style enters on a long period of undisputed dominion with the Neolithic age such as has never been attained again in historical times by any trend in art, least of all by that of formalism itself. Apart from Cretan-Mycenean art, this style dominates the whole period of the bronze and iron and of the Ancient-Oriental and archaic Greek ages, that is to say, a period of world history reaching from approximately 5000 to 500 B.C. In relation to this period of time all later styles seem short-lived and the later geometric and classicistic styles mere episodes. But what determined the age-long predominance of this conception of art which was so strictly controlled by the principles of abstract form? How was it able to outlast so many different economic, social and political systems? The uniform conception of art of the period dominated by the geometric style corresponds to an equally uniform sociological characteristic, which exerts a determining influence on this whole age, despite individual variations, namely the tendency towards a homogeneous organization of economy, towards an autocratic form of government and a hieratic outlook in the whole of society, an outlook dominated by cultus and religion, as opposed both to the still unorganized, primitively individualistic nomadic existence of the hunters and to the differentiated, consciously individualistic social life of the ancient and modern bourgeoisie based on the idea of competition. The outlook of the parasitical hunting community, living from one day to the next, was dynamic and anarchistic, and its art was correspondingly devoted to expansion, to the extension and differentiation of experience. The outlook of the productive peasantry, striving to assure and

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preserve the means of production, is static and traditionalistic, its forms of life are impersonal and stationary and its art forms are correspondingly conventional and invariable. Nothing is more natural than that there should develop along with the essentially collective and traditional methods of work in peasant societies solid, inflexible and stable forms in every field of cultural life. Hoernes was one of the first to emphasize the obstinate conservatism 'which is peculiar both to the style itself as well as to the economic nature of the lower peasantry',¹³ and Gordon Childe refers, in his characterization of this spirit, to the remarkable fact that the pots of a Neolithic village are all alike.¹⁴ The rural culture of the peasantry, which develops away from the fluctuating economic life of the towns, continues to remain faithful to the strictly regulated patterns of life handed down from one generation to another, and even in the peasant art of modern times shows certain features which are still related to the prehistoric geometric style.

The change of style from Palaeolithic naturalism to Neolithic geometrism is not achieved entirely without intermediary stages. As early as the age of the naturalistic style itself, we find side by side with the South French and North Spanish trend, striving in the direction of 'impressionism', an East Spanish group of paintings which are more expressionistic than impressionistic in character. The producers of these works seem to have given their whole attention to physical movements and their dynamics, and, in order to give more intensive and suggestive expression to them, they intentionally distort the proportions of the limbs, draw ludicrously long legs, impossibly thin upper parts of the body, distorted arms and dislocated joints. Nevertheless, this expressionism no more represents a principle opposed to naturalism than does any later expressionism. The exaggerated emphasis and the features simplified by exaggeration merely afford a more convenient starting point for stylization and schematization than absolutely correct proportions and forms. But the gradual simplification and stereotyping of contours, which Henri Brueil notes in the last phase of Palaeolithic development and defines as the 'conventionalization' of naturalistic forms,¹⁵ represents the first real transition to the geometrism of the Neolithic

age. He describes the process in the course of which the naturalistic drawings are executed more and more carelessly, with ever increasing abstraction, formal rigidity and stylization, and bases on this observation his theory of the development of geometric forms out of naturalism, a process which, although it may have proceeded without any internal caesurae, could not have been independent of external conditions. The schematization takes two directions: on the one hand, it pursues the search for clear and easily understood forms of communication and statement; on the other, it creates simple and appealing forms of decoration. And so we already find at the end of the Palaeolithic age all three basic forms of pictorial representation developed: the *imitative*, the *informative* and the *decorative*—in other words, the naturalistic likeness, the pictographic sign and the abstract ornament.

The transitional forms between naturalism and geometrism correspond to the intermediary stages which lead from an exploitative to a productive economy. The beginnings of agriculture and cattle-breeding probably developed even in certain hunting tribes from the preserving of bulbs and the sparing of pets—later on perhaps totem animals.¹⁶ The change is not a sudden revolution either in art or in economics, but will have taken place gradually in both spheres. And the same mutual interdependence will have existed between the transitional phenomena in both fields as between parasitical hunting and naturalism, on the one hand, and the productive peasantry and geometrism, on the other. Incidentally, we have an analogy in the economic and social history of modern primitive races, which gives us reason to conclude that this relationship is typical. The bushmen, who are hunters and nomads like Palaeolithic man, are at the stage of development which we have called that of the 'individual search for food', who have no knowledge of social co-operation, believe in no spirits and demons and are devoted to crude magic and witchcraft, produce a naturalistic art which is surprisingly similar to Palaeolithic painting; again, the negroes of the West African coast, who carry on productive agriculture, live in village communities and believe in animism, are strict formalists and have an abstract, geometrically devised art, like Neolithic man.¹⁷

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It is hardly possible to say anything more concrete about the economic and social conditions of these styles than that naturalism is connected with individualistic and anarchistic social patterns, with a certain lack of tradition, the lack of firm conventions and a purely secular outlook, whilst geometrism, on the other hand, is connected with a tendency to uniformity of organization, with stable institutions, and a very largely religiously orientated outlook on life; anything beyond the mere statement of these relationships is based mostly on equivocation. Such ambiguously applied concepts also underlie the correlation which Wilhelm Hausenstein attempts to establish between the geometric style and communistic outlook of the early 'agrarian democracies'.¹⁸ He finds an authoritarian, egalitarian and planning tendency in both phenomena, but overlooks the fact that these conceptions do not mean the same in the two distinct fields of art and society and that—by taking such a flexible view of these concepts—on the one hand, the same style can be connected with very different social forms and, on the other, the same social system can be connected with the most varied styles of art. What is understood by 'authoritarian' in the political sense can be applied both to autocratic as well as to socialistic, to feudal as well as to communist orders of society, whilst the limits of the geometric style are much narrower; they do not even entirely embrace the art of autocratic civilizations, let alone that of socialism. The concept of 'equality' is likewise narrower in its range when applied to society than to art. From the social-political point of view, it is opposed to autocratic principles of every kind, but in the sphere of art, where it has merely the sense of the superpersonal and the anti-individual, it is compatible with the most varied orders of society—it is, however, precisely the spirit of democracy and socialism to which it corresponds least of all. In the final analysis, there is no direct relationship between social and artistic 'planning'. Planning as the exclusion of free, unregulated competition in the field of economics and planning as the strictly disciplined execution of an artistic plan, elaborated to the last detail, can at the very most be brought into a metaphorical relationship with one another; in themselves they represent two absolutely different principles, and it is perfectly conceivable that

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in a planned economy and society a formally individualistic art, revelling in variety and improvisation, might well come to the fore. There is scarcely any greater danger for the sociological interpretation of cultural structures than such equivocations and none to which it is easier to fall victim. For there is nothing easier than to construct striking connections between the various styles in art and the social patterns predominating at any particular time, which are based on nothing but metaphor, and there is nothing more tempting than to make a show of such daring analogies. But they are just as fateful traps for truth as the illusions enumerated by Bacon and they might well be put on his list of warnings as *idola aequivocationis*.

3. THE ARTIST AS MAGICIAN AND PRIEST ART AS A PROFESSION AND DOMESTIC CRAFT

The creators of Palaeolithic animal drawings were to all appearances themselves 'professional' hunters—one can assume as much with almost absolute certainty from their intimate knowledge of animals—and it is improbable that as 'artists', or however they were called, they would have been exempt from the duties of food-providing.¹⁹ But certain signs definitely indicate that some vocational differentiation—although perhaps only in this particular calling—had already taken place. If, as we assume, the representation of animals really did serve the purposes of magic, then it can hardly be doubted that the persons who were capable of producing such works were simultaneously regarded as gifted with the power of magic and venerated as such, a status which brought with it, however, certain privileges and at least a partial emancipation from the duties of food-seeking. Incidentally, the elaborate and refined technique of Palaeolithic paintings also argues that these works were done not by dilettanti but by trained specialists who had spent a considerable part of their life learning and practising their art and who formed a professional class of their own. The many 'sketches', 'rough drafts' and corrected 'pupils' drawings', which have been found alongside the other surviving pictures, even make it seem highly probable

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that there was an organized educational activity at work, with schools, masters, local trends and traditions.²⁰ The artist-magician, therefore, seems to have been the first representative of specialization and the division of labour. At any rate, he emerges from the undifferentiated mass, alongside the ordinary magician and medicine-man, as the first 'professional' and is, as the possessor of special gifts, the harbinger of the real priestly class, which will later lay claim not only to exceptional abilities and knowledge but also to a kind of charisma and will abstain from all ordinary work. But even the partial exemption of one class from the tasks of direct food-seeking is evidence of comparatively advanced conditions; it means that this society can already afford the luxury of specialists. As far as those conditions are concerned in which man is still dependent on providing for his own daily sustenance, the doctrine of the artistic productivity of wealth is perfectly valid; at this stage of development the existence of works of art is in fact the sign of a certain abundance of the means of subsistence and of a relative freedom from immediate anxiety as far as food is concerned. But it cannot be applied to more highly developed conditions without some qualification, for even though it may be right that the very fact that painters and sculptors are able to exist at all argues a certain degree of material plenty, which society must be prepared to share with these 'unproductive' specialists, this principle must by no means be applied according to the method of that primitive sociology which makes the golden ages of art simply coincide with the epochs of economic prosperity.

With the separation of sacred and profane art, artistic activity in the Neolithic age probably passed into the hands of two different groups. The tasks of sepulchral art and the sculpture of idols, as well as the execution of religious dances, which—if one may apply the results of anthropological research to prehistorical conditions—now became the leading art in the age of animism,²¹ were in all probability entrusted exclusively to men, above all to magicians and priests. Profane art, on the other hand, which was now restricted to craft and had to solve merely decorative problems, probably lay entirely in the hands of women and may have formed a part of the activity of the home. Hoernes connects the

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whole geometric character of Neolithic art with the female element. 'The geometric style is primarily a feminine style'—he thinks—'it is feminine in its character and at the same time bears the marks of discipline and order.'²² The observation may be correct but the explanation is based on an equivocation. 'The geometric ornament seems', he says in another place, 'more suited to the domestic, pedantically tidy and at the same time superstitiously careful spirit of woman than to that of man. It is, considered purely aesthetically, a petty, lifeless and, despite all its luxuriousness and colour, a strictly limited mode of art, but within its limits healthy and efficient, pleasing by reason of the industry displayed and its external decorativeness—the expression of the feminine spirit in art.'²³ If one must express oneself in this metaphorical fashion, one might just as well connect the geometrical style with the strictness and the domineering spirit of the male.

The partial absorption of art by domestic industry and by domestic female crafts, that is to say, the fusion of artistic activity with other activities, is a retrogression from the standpoint of the division of labour and professional differentiation. For a functional division now occurs at the most between the sexes, but not between professional classes. Therefore, although agricultural civilizations promote specialization in general, they bring the professional artist class to an end for the time being. And this change is all the more complete because in fact not merely those branches of artistic activity practised by women but also those retained by man are now practised as side-lines. It is true that at this stage all artisan activity—with the possible exception of the art of the armourer—is a 'side-line' of this kind,²⁴ but one must not forget that artistic production, in contrast to all other manual labour, can already look back on an independent development of its own, and only now becomes a more or less dilettante leisure occupation. It is difficult to say whether the end of the independent artist class is one of the reasons for the simplification and schematization of artistic forms or is one result thereof. Certainly the geometric style, with its simple and conventional motifs, does not require anything like the thorough training required by the naturalistic style; but then the dilettantism, which it makes

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possible, probably contributes much to the simplification of art forms.

Agriculture and cattle-breeding bring long periods of leisure in their train. Farm work is limited to certain seasons; the winter is long and allows for long rests from labour. Neolithic art bears the marks of a 'peasant art', not only because it corresponds with its impersonal and traditionalistic forms to the conventional and conservative spirit of the peasantry, but also because it is the product of this leisure-time. But it is by no means at the same time a 'folk art' like the peasant art of today. At any rate, it is not a folk art so long as the differentiation of peasant societies into classes has not been completed—for 'folk art' only has a meaning, as has been said, in contrast to the 'art of a ruling class'; the art of a mass of people which has not yet divided into 'ruling and serving classes, high and fastidious and low and modest classes' cannot be described as 'folk art', for one reason because there is no other kind of art at all.²⁸ And the peasant art of the Neolithic age is no longer a 'folk art' once this differentiation has been completed, for the works created by the fine arts are then destined for the possessing upper class and are executed by that class, that is to say, usually by the women of that class. When Penelope sits at the loom beside her maids, she is still, to some extent, the rich peasant woman and the heiress of the female art of the Neolithic age. Manual labour, which is later looked down on, is still regarded here as a perfectly honourable activity, at least in so far as it is carried out by women in the home.

The surviving works of art of the prehistoric age are of quite outstanding importance for the sociology of art—not because they were perchance to a higher degree dependent on social conditions, but because they allow us to see the relationships between social patterns and art forms more clearly than the art of later ages. At any rate, there is nothing in the whole history of art which illuminates so clearly the connection between a change of style and the simultaneous change in economic and social conditions as the transition from the earlier to the later Stone Age. Prehistoric cultures show the marks of their derivation from social conditions more distinctly than later cultures in which forms that have already become partially ossified are dragged

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along from an earlier age and are often amalgamated undistinguishably with the new and still vital forms. The more developed the level of culture is whose art we are examining, the more complicated is the network of relationships and the more obscure the social background with which they are related. The greater the age of an art, of a style, of a genre, the longer are the periods of time during which the development proceeds according to immanent, autonomous laws of its own, unaffected by disturbances from outside, and the longer these more or less autonomous episodes are, the more difficult it is sociologically to interpret the individual elements of the form-complex in question. Thus the epoch immediately following the Neolithic age, in which the peasant cultures change into more dynamic urban cultures based on trade and industry, reveals such a relatively complicated structure that no particularly satisfactory sociological interpretation of certain phenomena is possible. The tradition of geometric-ornamental art is already so consolidated by this time that it can hardly be uprooted and remains predominant apparently for no particular sociological reason. But where, as in pre-historical times, everything is still bound up directly with actual life, where there are still no autonomous forms and no differences in principle between the old and the new, between tradition and modernity, there the sociological explanation of cultural phenomena is still comparatively simple and plainly feasible.

CHAPTER II

ANCIENT-ORIENTAL URBAN CULTURES

1. STATIC AND DYNAMIC ELEMENTS IN ANCIENT-ORIENTAL ART

THE end of the Neolithic age betokens almost as universal a re-orientation of life, almost as profound a revolution of economy and society, as its beginning. Then the break was marked by the transition from mere consumption to production, from primitive individualism to co-operation, now it is marked by the beginning of independent trade and handicrafts, the rise of cities and markets, and the agglomeration and differentiation of the population. In both cases we see before us a picture of complete change, although in both cases it takes place more as a gradual alteration than as a sudden subversion. In most of the institutions and customs of the Ancient-Oriental world, the autocratic forms of government, the partial maintenance of a natural economy, the permeation of daily life by religious cults and the rigorously formalistic trend of art, Neolithic customs and traditions continue side by side with the new urban way of life. In Egypt and Mesopotamia the peasantry continues its own traditionally defined existence, independent of the restless bustle of the cities, in its village settlements, within the framework of its domestic economy, and even though its influence is constantly on the decline, the spirit of its traditions is still discernible even in the latest and most advanced manifestations of the highly differentiated city cultures of these countries.

The decisive change in the new way of life is expressed above all in the fact that primary production is no longer the leading, historically most progressive occupation, but that it now enters

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the service of trade and handicraft. The increase in wealth, the accumulation of arable land and freely available food supplies in comparatively few hands, creates new, more intensive and more varied needs for trade products and leads to an increased division of labour. The maker of pictures of spirits, gods and men, of decorated utensils and jewels emerges from the closed milieu of the home and becomes a specialist whose trade is his livelihood. He is no longer either the inspired magician or the merely nimble-fingered member of the household, but the craftsman, carving sculptures, painting pictures, shaping vessels, just as others make axes and shoes, and he is hardly more highly esteemed than the smith or the shoemaker. The craftsmanlike perfection of the work, the assured control of difficult material and the flawless care of execution, which is especially noticeable in Egypt,¹ in contrast to the genius-like or dilettante carefreeness of earlier art, is a result of the professional specialization of the artist, of city life with the growing competition of contending forces and of the training of an experienced and fastidious élite of connoisseurs in the cultural centres of the city, in the temple precincts and at the royal court.

The city, with its concentration of population and the intellectual stimuli produced by close contact between the different levels of society, its fluctuating market and its anti-traditionalist spirit, conditioned by the peculiar nature of the market, its foreign trade and the acquaintance of its merchants with foreign lands and peoples, its money economy, rudimentary as it may be at first, and the displacements of wealth promoted by the nature of money, inevitably had a revolutionary effect in every field of cultural life, and brought about a more dynamic and more individualistic style in art, more free from the influence of traditional forms and types than the geometrism of the New Stone Age. The well-known and often inordinately emphasized traditionalism of Ancient-Oriental art, the slowness of its total development and the longevity of its individual tendencies, merely restricted the mobilizing influence of the new urban ways of life, but did not arrest it. For if one compares the course of Egyptian art with those conditions in which 'all the pots of a village were alike' and the distinct stages of cultural develop-

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ment could only be expressed in terms of millennia, one becomes aware of stylistic phenomena, whose differences one from another are often overlooked merely as a result of their foreignness, which makes it more difficult to differentiate their distinct characteristics. But to attempt to derive this art from one single principle and to disregard the fact that it bears within itself the polarity of static and dynamic, conservative and progressive, strictly formal and form-destroying tendencies, is to falsify its very essence. In order to understand it properly, one must feel the living forces of experimenting individualism and expansive naturalism behind the rigid traditional forms, forces which flow from the urban outlook on life and destroy the stationary culture of the Neolithic age; but one must not on any account allow oneself to be led by this impression to underestimate the spirit of conservatism at work in the history of the ancient East. For apart from the fact that the schematic formalism of the Neolithic peasant culture not only continues to exert an influence but produces constantly new variants of the old pattern, at least in the early stages of the Ancient-Oriental epoch, the leading social forces, above all the royal house and the priesthood, contribute to the preservation of the *status quo* and the traditional forms of art and worship as far as possible.

The compulsion under which the artist has to work in this society is so relentless that according to the theories of modern liberalistic aesthetics all genuine cultural achievement should have been fundamentally impossible from the outset. And yet some of the most magnificent works of art originated precisely here in the Ancient Orient under the most dire pressure imaginable. They prove that there is no direct relationship between the personal freedom of the artist and the aesthetic quality of his works. For it is a fact that every intention of an artist has to make its way through the meshes of a closely entwined net; every work of art is produced by the tension between a series of aims and a series of resistances to their achievement—resistances represented by inadmissible motifs, social prejudices and faulty powers of judgment of the public, and aims which have either already assimilated these resistances or stand openly and irreconcilably opposed to them. If the resistances in one direction are impossible

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to overcome, then the artist's invention and powers of expression turn to a goal the way to which is not obstructed, and it is very unusual for him even to be aware of the fact that his achievement is a substitute for the real thing. Even in the most liberal democracy the artist does not move with perfect freedom and unrestraint; even there he is restricted by innumerable considerations foreign to his art. The different measure of freedom may be of the greatest importance for him personally but in principle there is no difference between the dictates of a despot and the conventions of even the most liberal social order. If force in itself were contrary to the spirit of art, perfect works of art could arise only in a state of complete anarchy. But in reality the pre-suppositions on which the aesthetic quality of a work depends lie beyond the alternative presented by political freedom and compulsion. Therefore the other extreme, namely, the assumption that the ties which restrict the artist's freedom of movement are profitable and fruitful in themselves, that the freedom of the modern artist is consequently responsible for the inadequacies of modern art and that compulsion and restrictions could and should be produced artificially as the supposed guarantees of true 'style',—such an assumption is just as wrong as the anarchist point of view.

2. THE STATUS OF THE ARTIST AND THE ORGANIZATION OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

The first and for a long time the only employers of artists were priests and princes and their most important workshops during the whole period of Ancient-Oriental culture were in temple and palace households. In the workshops of these households they worked either as voluntary or compulsory employees, as labourers able to move about freely or as lifelong slaves. Here far the greatest and most valuable part of the artistic production of the time was accomplished. The first accumulation of land fell into the hands of warriors and robbers, conquerors and oppressors, chieftains and princes; the first rationally administered property may well have been the temple estates, that is to say, the properties of the gods founded by the princes and managed by the

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priests. Therefore, it is highly probable that the priests were the first regular employers of artists, the first to give them commissions; the kings will merely have followed their example. Ancient-Oriental art was restricted in the first place, apart from domestic industry, to the carrying out of the tasks set by these patrons. Its creations consisted for the most part in votive gifts to the gods and royal memorials, in the requisites of either the cult of the gods or the ruler, in instruments of propaganda designed to serve either the fame of the immortals or the posthumous fame of their earthly representatives. Both the priesthood and the royal house were part of the same hieratic system, and the tasks which they set the artist, of securing their spiritual salvation and endowing them with lasting fame, were united in the foundation of all primitive religion, the cult of the dead. Both demanded that the artist should provide solemn, stately and lofty representations, both encouraged the artist to remain static in his outlook and subjected him to the service of their own conservative aims. Both did all they could to prevent innovations in art, as well as any kind of reform, since they feared any alteration in the prevailing order of things and declared the traditional rules of art to be just as sacred and inviolable as the traditional religious creeds and forms of worship. The priests allowed the kings to be regarded as gods so as to draw them into their own sphere of authority and the kings allowed temples to be built for the gods and priests so as to increase their own fame. Each wanted to profit from the prestige of the other; each sought to enlist the help of the artist in the fight for the preservation of royal and priestly power. Under such circumstances there could be no more question of an autonomous art, created from purely aesthetic motives and for purely aesthetic purposes, than under those of the prehistoric era. The great works of art, of monumental sculpture and wall-painting, were not created for their own sake and their own beauty. Sculptures were not commissioned in order to be set up in front of temples and on the market place—as in classical antiquity or the Renaissance; most of them stood in the dark interior of the sanctuary and in the depth of the sepulchre.²

The demand for pictorial representations, for works of sepulchral art in particular, was so great in Egypt from the very

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beginning, that one must assume the profession of the artist to have become distinct and self-supporting at a fairly early date. But the rôle of art as a subordinate servant was emphasized so strongly and its absorption in practical tasks was so complete that the person of the artist himself disappeared almost entirely behind his work. The painter and sculptor remained anonymous craftsmen, in no way obtruding their own personalities. We know only very few names of artists from Egypt and as the masters did not sign their works³ it is impossible to connect even these few names with any definite body of work.⁴ We possess, it is true, pictures of sculptors' workshops, above all from El Amarna, and even that of a sculptor working at an identifiable portrait of the Queen Tyi,⁵ but the person of the artist and the attribution of the extant works of art is doubtful in every case. If the wall-decoration of a tomb occasionally represents a painter or sculptor and gives his name, we may assume that the artist intended to immortalize himself,⁶ but this is neither wholly certain, nor can we derive much benefit from the information in view of the scarcity of other details of the history of Egyptian art. It is impossible to form any clear outline of the personality of these artists. These self-portraits do not even give any satisfactory information about what the artist in question thought about himself and the value of his work. It is difficult to say whether we must interpret them simply as an attempt by the artist to record his everyday routine or whether, driven, like the kings and the great ones of the kingdom, by the urge to secure immortal fame for himself, in the shadow of their fame, he wished to set up a monument which would allow him to survive for ever in the memory of man.

It is true that we are acquainted with the names of master-builders and master-sculptors in Egypt, and special social honours will have been bestowed on them as high court officials, but on the whole the artist remains an undistinguished craftsman, esteemed at the most as such, and not as a personality in himself. An idea like Lessing's notion of a 'Raphael without hands' would have been quite inconceivable. Only in the case of the master-builder is it possible to speak of a dividing-line between intellectual and manual work; the sculptor and the painter are

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nothing but manual workers. The school-books of the learned scribes give the best idea of the subordinate social position of the artist in Egypt: they speak with contempt of the artist's banausic profession.⁷ Compared with the position of these scribes, that of the painter and sculptor does not seem very honourable, particularly in the earlier periods of Egyptian history. This is evidence of that underestimation of the arts in favour of literature which is so familiar from the records of classical antiquity. And here, in the ancient East, the dependence of social status on the primitive conception of prestige, according to which manual labour was regarded as dishonourable,⁸ will have been even more close than with the Greeks and Romans. At all events, the esteem in which the artist was held grew as general progress developed. In the New Kingdom many artists already belong to the higher social classes, and in some families several generations hold fast to the profession of artist without a break, which can be regarded in itself as a sign of a comparatively advanced class-consciousness. But even now the rôle of the artist in the life of society is still rather subordinate, compared with the presumable function of the prehistoric artist-magician.

The temple and palace workshops were the greatest and most important, but they were not the sole workshops; such establishments were also to be found on the great private estates and in the bazaars of the bigger cities.⁹ These latter united several small independent workshops which, in contrast to the routine of the temple, palace and estate households, used exclusively free labour. The purpose of such amalgamation was, on the one hand, to facilitate co-operation between different craftsmen, and, on the other hand, to produce and sell goods in one and the same place in order to become independent of the merchant.¹⁰ In the temple, palace and private workshops the craftsmen still worked within the framework of self-contained and self-sufficient households, whose only difference from the peasant households of the Neolithic age was that they were incomparably bigger and were based entirely on foreign, often forced labour; structurally there was no essential difference between them. As opposed to both of these, the bazaar system, with its separation of workshop routine from the household, is a revolutionary innovation: it contains

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the germ of the independent industry, producing goods systematically, which is no longer restricted to occasional commissions, but, on the one hand, is carried on as an exclusive professional activity, and, on the other, produces its goods for the free market. This system not only turns the primary producer into a manual worker, but removes him from the closed framework of the household. The probably equally old putting-out system, which leaves the worker in his home but separates him from the household spiritually by making him work for a customer rather than for himself, has the same effect. The principle of the household economy, in which production is limited to immediate internal needs, is thereby broken.

In the course of this development the man gradually takes over even those branches of manual labour and art which were formerly the special province of the woman, such as the making of ceramic products and of textiles.¹¹ Herodotus remarks with amazement that in Egypt men—albeit forced labourers—sit at the loom; but this phenomenon was merely in accordance with the general trend of development, which finally led to manual crafts becoming the exclusive province of the male. This is in no way—as in the parable of Heracles at Omphale's spinning-wheel—the expression of the enslavement of the male, but of the separation of manual crafts from the household and the increasingly difficult manipulation of tools.

The great workshops attached to the royal palace and the temples were the schools in which young artists were trained. It is usual to regard especially those workshops connected with the temples as the most important transmitters of tradition—an assumption the justification for which is not generally acknowledged, however, just as doubt has sometimes been cast on the whole predominant influence of the priesthood on the practice of the arts.¹² At all events, the educational importance of a workshop was all the greater the longer it was able to maintain its tradition and in this respect some temple workshops will probably have been superior to the palace workshop, although, on the other hand, the court, as the intellectual centre of the country, was in a position to exercise a kind of dictatorship in matters of taste. Incidentally, both in the temple and in the palace work-

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shops the whole practice of art had the same academic-scholastic character. The fact that from the very beginning there existed universally binding rules, universally valid models and uniform methods of work, points to a system directed from only a few centres. This academic, somewhat pedantic and strait-laced tradition led, on the one hand, to an excess of mediocre products, but, on the other hand, it secured that comparatively high average level which is so typical of Egyptian art.¹³ How great was the care and pedagogical skill the Egyptians expended on the education of the rising generation of young artists is shown even by the teaching materials which have been preserved, the plaster casts from nature, the anatomical representations of individual parts of the body intended for instructional purposes and, above all, those specimen showpieces, which demonstrated to the pupils the development of a work of art in all the phases of its production.

The organization of artistic work, the procuring and the varied employment of assistants, the specialization and the combination of individual achievements, was so highly developed in Egypt that it reminds one in a way of the methods of the medieval cathedral workshops and in some respects puts all later, individualistically organized art activity in the shade. From the very beginning, the whole development strove towards a standardization of production, and this tendency was from the outset in accordance with the routine of a workshop. Above all, the gradual rationalization of craft-processes exerted a levelling influence on artistic methods. With increasing demands the custom grew of working according to sketches, models and uniform patterns and an almost mechanically stereotyped technique of production was developed which enabled the different objects simply to be constructed from separate uniform components.¹⁴ The application of such rationalistic methods to art production was, of course, possible only because it was usual to set artists the same task over and over again, commissioning the same votive gifts, the same idols, the same sepulchral monuments, the same type of royal images and private portraits. And as originality of subject-matter was never very much appreciated in Egypt, in fact was generally tabooed, the whole ambition of the artist was concentrated on thoroughness and precision of

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execution, which is so conspicuous even in the less important works and which compensates for the lack of interest and piquancy in the invention. The demand for a clean, polished finish also explains why the output of the Egyptian workshops was comparatively small in spite of the rationalistic organization employed there. The fondness of the sculptors for works in stone, in which merely the rough hewing of the figure out of the block could be left to the assistants, but the finer detailed work and the final completion was reserved for the master, imposed narrow limits on production from the very outset.¹⁵

3. THE STEREOTYPING OF ART IN THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

The fact that the art of the earlier periods is less 'archaic' and stylized than that of the later periods is the clearest evidence of how untypical conservatism and conventionalism are of the racial character of the Egyptian people, and of how this characteristic is rather a historically conditioned phenomenon changing as the total situation develops. In the reliefs of the last predynastic and of the first dynastic epoch there prevails a freedom of form and composition which is lost later on and is only won back again in the wake of a general cultural revolution. Even the masterpieces from the later period of the Old Kingdom, such as the 'Scribe' in the Louvre or the so-called 'Village-Mayor' in Cairo, make such a fresh and vital impression that we do not find their equal again until the days of Amenhotep IV. Perhaps there never was so much freedom and spontaneity in Egyptian art as in this early stage of development. The special conditions of life in the new urban civilization, the differentiated social relationships, the specialization of the manual crafts and the emancipation of trade contributed more directly to the spread of individualism than later when this influence was obstructed and often frustrated by forces fighting for the maintenance of their own authority. Not until the onset of the Middle Kingdom, when the feudal aristocracy comes into the foreground with its strongly emphasized class-consciousness, do the rigid conventions of courtly-religious

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art develop, which suppress any further emergence of spontaneous forms of expression. The stereotyped style of cultic representations was well known as early as the Neolithic age, but the stiffly ceremonial forms of courtly art are absolutely new and come into prominence here for the first time in the history of human culture. They reflect the rule of a higher, superindividual social order, of a world which owes its greatness and splendour to the favour of the king. They are anti-individualistic, static and conventional, because they are the forms of expression of an outlook on life, for which descent, class, membership of a clan or a group represents a higher degree of reality than the character of the particular individual, and the abstract rules of conduct and the moral code are much more directly in evidence than whatever the individual may feel, think or will. All the good things and the charms of life are connected, for the privileged members of this society, with their separation from the other classes, and all the maxims which they follow assume more or less the character of rules of decorum and etiquette. This decorum and etiquette, the whole self-stylization of the upper class, demand among other things that one does not allow oneself to be portrayed as one really is, but according to how one must appear to conform with certain hallowed conventions, remote from reality and the present time. Etiquette is the highest law not merely for the ordinary mortal, but also for the king, and in the imagination of this society even the gods accept the forms of courtly ceremonial.¹⁶

In the end, the portraits of the king become purely representative images; the individual characteristics of the early period disappear from them without a trace. Finally there is no longer any difference between the impersonal turns of phrase in their eulogistic inscriptions and the stereotyped character of their features. The self-glorifying autobiographical texts which the kings and the great landlords have inscribed on their statues and the portrayal of events from their lives are from the very beginning infinitely monotonous; in spite of the abundance of monuments which have survived, we seek in them in vain for individual characteristics and the expression of personal life.¹⁷ The fact that the sculptures of the Old Kingdom are richer in individual features than the biographical records of the same period is

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to be explained, among other things, by the circumstance that they still have a magical function reminiscent of Palaeolithic art, which the literary works lack. For in the portrait the *Ka*, that is, the guardian-spirit of the deceased, was supposed to find the body in which he had dwelt on earth in its true and genuinely lifelike form again; this magical-religious aim is partly the explanation of the naturalism of the portrayals. But in the Middle Kingdom, in which the representative function of works of art gains the upper hand over their religious significance, the portraits lose their magical and, therefore, also their naturalistic character. For just as the autobiographical inscriptions reflect in the first place the traditional forms in which a king expresses himself, when he is talking about himself, so the portrait-sculptures of the Middle Kingdom chiefly express the ideal appearance which belongs to a king according to courtly convention. But the king's ministers and courtiers now strive to make just as solemn, calm and measured an impression as the king himself. And just as the autobiography of a loyal subject only mentions what has reference to the king, only the light shed by his gracious favour, so in the pictorial representations everything revolves around the person of the king as in a solar system.

The formalism of the Middle Kingdom can scarcely be explained as a natural stage of development following on continuously from its predecessor; the fact that art returns to the archaism of primitive forms deriving from the Neolithic age is attributable to external reasons which are only intelligible sociologically and cannot be explained purely in terms of the history of art.¹⁸ In view of the naturalistic achievements of the early period and the abiding talent of the Egyptians for accurate observation and the faithful reproduction of nature, we must discern a quite definite purpose in this deviation from empirical reality. In no other period in the whole history of art is the choice between naturalism and abstraction more a question of intention and not merely of aptitude, than here—of intention in the sense that the artist's purpose is determined not only by aesthetic considerations and that aesthetic intentions must be in accordance with practical desires. The well-known plaster-casts—possibly slightly touched-up death masks—which have been discovered in the workshop of

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the sculptor Thutmosis in El Amarna prove that the Egyptian artist was also able to see things differently from the way he was in the habit of representing them, and we may assume that he in most cases deliberately deviated from the image which he saw in the way shown by these masks.¹⁹ One only needs to compare the shaping of the different parts of the body with one another to see clearly that there was a conflict of purpose here and that the artist was moving in two different worlds—an artistic and an extra-artistic world—at the same time.

The most striking characteristic of Egyptian art, and indeed not only in its strictly formalistic, but to a greater or lesser degree in its naturalistic phases of development as well, is the rationalism of the technique. The Egyptians never freed themselves completely from the 'conceptual picture' of Neolithic art, of primitive pictorial representations and child drawings, and never overcame the influence of the so-called 'completing' technique, by which a picture is composed from several elements which are certainly interrelated in the artist's mind but which are optically incoherent and often even mutually contradictory. They forgo producing the illusion of the unity and uniqueness of the visual impression; they renounce perspective, foreshortenings and intersections in the interests of clarity, and this renunciation leads to a strict taboo which proves stronger than any desire they may have to conform faithfully to nature. How lasting the effect of such a purely external and abstract prohibition can be, and how easily it can be reconciled at times even with a less inhibited aesthetic purpose, is shown by the East Asiatic painting, which is in many respects more similar to our conception of art and in which, even today, shadows, for example, are taboo because they are regarded as making an all too brutal impact on the beholder. The Egyptians must have had to some extent this feeling that all attempts to deceive the observer contain an element of brutality and vulgarity, and that the methods of abstract, strictly formal art are 'more refined' than the deceptive effects of naturalism.

Of all the rationalistic formal principles in Ancient-Oriental and especially in Egyptian art that of 'frontality' is the most conspicuous and the most characteristic. By 'frontality' we mean that law governing the representation of the human figure, discovered

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by Julius Lange and Adolf Erman, according to which, in whatever position the body is depicted, the whole chest surface is turned to the onlooker so that the upper part of the body is divisible by a vertical line into two equal halves. This axial approach, offering the broadest possible view of the body, obviously attempts to present the clearest and least complicated impression possible, in order to prevent any misunderstanding, confusion, or concealment of the elements of the picture. The attribution of frontality to a basic lack of technical skill may be justified to some extent, but the stubborn retention of this technique, even in periods in which there can no longer be any question of such an involuntary limitation of artistic purpose, demands another explanation.

In the frontal representation of the human figure, the forward turning of the upper part of the body is the expression of a definite and direct relationship to the onlooker. Palaeolithic art, in which no kind of notice is taken of the public, also knows nothing of frontality; its illusionism is merely another form of its ignoring of the onlooker. Ancient-Oriental art, on the other hand, makes a direct approach to the receptive subject; it is an art which both demands and shows public respect. Its approach to the beholder is an act of reverence, of courtesy and etiquette. All courtly and courteous art, intent on bestowing fame and praise, contains an element of the principle of frontality—of confronting the onlooker, the person who has commissioned the work, the master whom to serve and delight is the artist's duty.²⁰ The work of art makes its direct approach to him as to a connoisseur, who would not be taken in by the artful deceptions of vulgar illusionism. This attitude finds a late but still abundantly clear expression in the conventions of the classical court theatre, in which the actor, quite regardless of the demands of stage deception, addresses the audience directly, apostrophizes it, as it were, with every word and gesture, and not only avoids 'turning his back' on the audience but emphasizes by every possible means that the whole proceeding is a pure fiction, an entertainment conducted in accordance with previously agreed rules. The naturalistic theatre forms the transition to the absolute opposite of this 'frontal' art, namely the film, which, with its mobilization of the

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audience, leading them to the events instead of leading and presenting the events to them, and attempting to represent the action in such a way as to suggest that the actors have been caught red-handed, by chance and by surprise, reduces the fictions and conventions of the theatre to a minimum. With its robust illusionism, its forthright and indiscreet directness, its violent attack on the audience, it expresses a democratic conception of art, held by liberal, anti-authoritarian societies, just as clearly as the whole of the courtly and aristocratic art—by its mere emphasis of the stage, the footlights, the frame and the socle—is the unmistakable expression of a highly artificial, specially commissioned occasion, from which it is obvious that the patron is an initiated connoisseur who does not need to be deceived.

Apart from frontality, Egyptian art displays a whole series of standing formulae, which, although they are less obvious, express the conventionality of most of the stylistic principles governing this art, especially that of the Middle Kingdom, just as acutely. Foremost among them is the rule that the legs of a figure are always to be drawn in profile, and that *both* of them are to be shown from the inside, that is, looking from the big toe; then there is the regulation that the moving leg and the outstretched arm—probably first of all in order to prevent disturbing overlappings—must be farther away from the onlooker; finally there is the convention that it is always the right side of the figures portrayed which is turned to the onlooker. These traditions, laws and regulations were observed with the utmost strictness by the priesthood and the court, the feudal aristocracy and the bureaucracy of the Middle Kingdom. The feudal lords were all little kings trying to surpass the real Pharaoh in formality wherever possible, and the higher bureaucracy, which still kept itself strictly secluded from the middle class, was deeply imbued with the hieratic spirit and felt along thoroughly conservative lines. Social conditions did not change until the advent of the New Kingdom which arose out of the turmoil of the Hyksos invasion. Isolated, self-contained traditional Egypt became not only a materially and culturally flourishing country but became possessed of a wider vision, creating the beginnings of a supernational world-culture. Egyptian art not only drew all the

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marginal lands of the Mediterranean and the whole of the Near East into its sphere of influence, but adopted suggestions from all parts and discovered that there was also a whole world beyond its own borders and outside its own traditions and conventions.²¹

4. NATURALISM IN THE AGE OF AKHENATON

Amenhotep IV, with whose name the great cultural revolution is connected, is not only the founder of a religion, not only the discoverer of the idea of monotheism, as he is generally known to be, not only the 'first prophet' and the 'first individualist' in world history, as he has been called,²² but also the first conscious innovator in art: the first man to turn naturalism into a programme and oppose it to the archaic style, as a newly attained achievement. Bek, his chief sculptor, adds to the titles which he bears, the words: 'the pupil of His Majesty'.²³ What art owes to him and artists learnt from him is obviously a new love of truth, a new sensibility and sensitiveness which leads to a kind of impressionism in Egyptian art. The overcoming of the stiff, academic style by his artists is in harmony with his own fight against pedantic, empty and meaningless traditions in religion. Under his influence the formalism of the Middle Kingdom yields both in religion and art to a dynamic and naturalistic approach which encourages men to delight in making new discoveries. New themes are chosen, new symbols sought out, the portrayal of new and unusual situations is favoured and the attempt is made not only to depict intimate individual spiritual life but, even more than that, to carry an intellectual tension, a heightened sensitivity and an almost abnormal nervous animation into the portraits. The rudiments of perspective in drawing, attempts at more coherent group-composition, a more lively interest in landscape, a fondness for representations of everyday scenes and happenings, and, as a result of the aversion from the old monumental style, a marked pleasure in the delicate and dainty forms of the minor arts—all these begin to show themselves. The only surprising feature is how thoroughly courtly, ceremonial and formal this art remains in spite of all the innovations. The themes are the

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expression of a new world, in the faces a new spirit is mirrored, a new sensibility, and yet frontality, the 'completing' method, proportions drawn in accordance with the social rank of the person portrayed and with a complete disregard for the facts, still prevail along with most of the rules of correct form. In spite of the naturalistic trend of the time, this is still a courtly art the structure of which is in some respects reminiscent of the rococo, a style, as is well known, equally dominated by anti-classical, individualistic and form-disintegrating tendencies and yet still a thoroughly courtly, ceremonial and conventional art. We see Amenhotep IV in his family circle, in scenes and situations of daily life, with a human intimacy exceeding all previous conceptions, and yet he still moves in rectangular planes, turns the whole of his chest surface to the onlooker and is still twice as big as ordinary mortals; the picture is still the product of a seigniorial art, intended to serve as a memorial to the king. It is true that the ruler is no longer portrayed as a god, completely free of all earthly trammels, but he is still subject to the etiquette of the court. There are pictures in which a figure stretches out the arm which is nearer, not the arm more distant from the onlooker, and we also find everywhere hands and feet drawn with greater anatomical accuracy and joints which move more naturally, but in other respects this art seems to have become even more precious than it was before the great reform.

The means of expression employed by naturalism in the age of the New Kingdom are so rich and subtle that they must have had a long past, a long period of preparation and perfecting. Where do they come from? In what form did they keep themselves alive, before they emerged under Akhenaton? What saved them from destruction during the rigorously formal period of the Middle Kingdom? The answer is simple: naturalism had always been latent as an undercurrent in Egyptian art and left unmistakable traces of its influence, alongside the official style, at least in the non-official branches of art. The Egyptologist W. Spiegelberg separates this current from the rest of art, sets up a special category for it and calls it Egyptian 'folk art'. But, unfortunately, it is not clear whether he means by that an art by or for the people, a peasant art or an urban art designed for the people, and

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whether, in any case, when he speaks of the 'folk' he means the broad masses of the peasants and artisans or the urban, mercantile and official middle class. The people who remained in primary production and within the framework of a peasant economy can be considered a creative element in the later phases of Egyptian history at the most in the field of the applied arts, that is, in a branch of art whose influence on the development of style becomes constantly less and was probably not very important even in the Old Kingdom. The artisans and artists of the palace and temple households come from the people, it is true, but, as the art-producers of the upper class, they have practically nothing in common with the outlook of their own social class. The common people, who are excluded from the privileges of property and power, cannot be reckoned among the public interested in art in the Ancient-Oriental despotisms any more, in fact even less, than in the later epochs of history. Painting and sculpture, being such a costly pursuit, were always and everywhere the exclusive preserve of the privileged classes and probably even more exclusively in the ancient East than in later times. The common people had not the slightest chance of being able to employ artists and to acquire works of art. They buried their dead in the sand without erecting permanent memorials. Even the more moneyed middle class could hardly be said to be of any decisive importance as consumers and patrons of art compared with the feudal lords and the high bureaucracy; they were in no sense a factor which could have had any appreciable influence on the destinies of art as opposed to the tastes and wishes of the upper class.

We may assume that there was, even in the Old Kingdom, a manufacturing and trading middle class alongside the nobility and the peasantry. In the Middle Kingdom, this class gains in strength very remarkably.²⁴ The official careers which now become open to its members offer good, though, to start with, comparatively modest prospects of rising in the social scale. In trade and industry it becomes a tradition for the son to take up the father's calling and this contributes materially to the formation of a more sharply defined middle class.²⁵ It is true that Flinders Petrie doubts whether there was a well-to-do middle

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class as early as the Middle Kingdom, but he does accept the existence in the New Kingdom of an already very wealthy lower bureaucracy.²⁶ The fact is that in the meantime Egypt had become not only a military state offering a highly promising career in the army to the new elements which were working their way up from the lower levels of society, but also a bureaucratically-controlled state which was becoming more and more rigidly centralized and which had to replace the vanishing feudal aristocracy by an endless number of crown officials, that is to say, to form a middle official class from the ranks of the old trading and manufacturing classes. From this subordinate soldiery and officialdom arose, for the most part, the new urban middle class which now also began to play some part among those taking an active interest in art. But it will hardly have had essentially different tastes or demanded anything different from art than the upper class which it was emulating, although it already possessed houses and tombs adorned with works of art; it will have had, however, to be satisfied with less pretentious works. In any case, we have no monuments surviving from the dynastic period which could possibly be regarded as examples of an independent popular art, distinct from the art of the court, the temples and the aristocracy. The urban middle class will probably have had some influence on the ideas about art held by the upper class, in spite of its state of intellectual dependence—perhaps we may even connect the individualism and naturalism of the age of Akhenaton with this influence of the lower levels of society—but the common people and the middle class neither produced nor enjoyed the products of an art distinct from the official style of the upper class.

There are, therefore, in no sense two different types of art in Egypt; there is no 'folk art' alongside the art of the court and the nobility. A division can be traced running through the whole of Egyptian art, it is true, but it does not separate the works into two distinct groups, it runs rather through the individual works themselves. Besides the severely conventional, stiffly ceremonial, solemnly monumental style, we also find everywhere signs of a less restrained, more spontaneous and natural approach. This dualism is expressed most distinctly where two figures in the

same composition are portrayed in the two different styles. And such works as, for instance, the well-known interior showing the mistress in the conventional court style, that is to say, in a strictly 'frontal' position, but a servant in a wholly unaffected attitude, taken from the side-view, with frontal symmetry partly abandoned, make it abundantly clear that the style varies purely according to the nature of the subject itself. Members of the ruling class are portrayed in the official style of the court, whereas members of the lower classes are shown often in the plebeian naturalistic style. The two styles are differentiated not by the class-consciousness of the artist, who was in any case quite unable to give expression to his class-consciousness even if he had any, nor by the class-consciousness of the public, which was still completely under the influence and spell of the court, the nobility and the priesthood, but, as we have said, the style used was determined exclusively in accordance with the nature of the subject. The little scenes of labour, showing craftsmen, servants and slaves at their daily work, which form part of the burial adjuncts of the aristocracy, are kept within the limits of thoroughly naturalistic, un-monumental and playful forms, but the statues of the gods, however unpretentious they may be, are worked in the style of official court art. In the course of the history of art and literature we repeatedly meet this stylistic differentiation according to subject-matter. For example, the dual manner of characterization employed by Shakespeare, according to which his servants and clowns speak in everyday prose but his heroes and lords in elaborately artistic verse, corresponds to this 'Egyptian', thematically determined alternation of style. For Shakespeare's characters do not speak the different language of the various classes as they exist in reality, like the characters in a modern drama, for instance, who are all drawn naturalistically, whether they are of high or low degree, but the members of the ruling class are portrayed in a stylized manner and express themselves in a language non-existent in real life, whereas the representatives of the common people are described realistically and speak the idiom of the street, the inns and the workshop.

Another scholar thinks that the observance or violation of the principle of 'frontality' does not depend on whether the char-

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acters portrayed belong to aristocratic circles or to the common people, but on whether they appear in action or in a resting position.²⁷ Even if this observation is correct to some extent, one must not forget that the kings and lords are in fact normally shown in an attitude of solemn quiet and rest, whereas the common folk are shown almost always moving about their daily work. But the representatives of the ruling class preserve—and this refutes the theory—the forms of frontality even when they appear in action, as in battle or hunting scenes.

There is far more solid justification for speaking of the existence of a provincial art alongside the art of the residence than of a folk art alongside that of the court. The important artistic achievements originate again and again, and more exclusively as progress continues, at the royal court or in the precincts of the court—first in Memphis, then in Thebes and finally in El Amarna. What takes place in the provinces, far away from the capital and the great temples, is comparatively unimportant and lags slowly and laboriously behind the general development.²⁸ It represents a culture that has merely percolated down from the upper class, it is in no sense a culture which has risen from the depth of folk-life. This provincial art, which it is impossible to consider as the continuation of the old peasant art, is also intended for the land-owning aristocracy, and owes its very existence to the separation of the feudal nobility from the court, a process which had been taking place since the 6th dynasty. The new provincial nobility with its backward regional culture and its derivative provincial art is formed from these elements which had broken away from the capital.

5. MESOPOTAMIA

The real problem of Mesopotamian art consists in the fact that, despite an economy based predominantly on trade and industry, finance and credit, it has a more rigidly disciplined, less changeable, less dynamic character than the art of Egypt, a country much more deeply rooted in agriculture and a natural economy. The code of Hammurabi, which dates from the third

millennium B.C., shows that trade and manual crafts, book-keeping and the granting of credit were highly developed in Babylonia even at that time, and that comparatively complicated bank transactions such as payments to third parties and the mutual adjustment of accounts were carried out.²⁹ Commerce and finance were so much more highly developed here than in Egypt that, in contrast to the Egyptian, it was possible for the Babylonian to be called quite simply the 'business man'.³⁰ The greater formal discipline of Babylonian art alongside the more mobile and more directly urban economy refutes, however, the otherwise normally valid sociological thesis according to which the strict geometric style is connected with traditionalistic agriculture and unrestrained naturalism with a more dynamic urban economy. Perhaps the more rigid forms of despotism and the more intolerant spirit of religion in Babylonia set themselves against the emancipating influence of city life, that is, assuming that the mere circumstance that there was only an art of the court and temple here, and no one besides the ruler and the priests could exert any influence on the practice of art, had not nipped all individualistic and naturalistic efforts in the bud. Peasant art and the more popular minor forms of art played an even smaller part in the land of the Two Rivers than in the other civilized lands of the ancient East,³¹ and artistic activity was even more impersonal here than in Egypt, for example. We know almost none of the names of Babylonian artists and we divide up the history of Babylonian art purely according to the reigns of the kings.³² No distinction was made here either terminologically or in actual practice between art and craft; the code of Hammurabi names the master-builder and the sculptor alongside the smith and the shoemaker.

Abstract rationalism is practised even more consistently in Babylonian and Assyrian art than in Egyptian. The human figure is shown not only in strict frontality with the head turned to show the revealing side-view, but the characteristic parts of the face, the nose and eye, are considerably magnified, whilst the less interesting features, such as the forehead and chin, are greatly reduced.³³ The anti-naturalistic principle of frontality is nowhere clearer in evidence than in the so-called 'Doorkeepers', the winged

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lions and bulls, in Assyrian architectural sculpture. There is hardly a branch of Egyptian art in which the supremely stylizing approach, renouncing all illusionism, was put into practice so uncompromisingly as in these figures, which have, from the side-view, four moving, and from the front view, two stationary feet, five altogether, and which really represent the mixture of two animals. The striking contravention of natural law is here due to purely rational motives: the creator of this genre obviously intended that the beholder should obtain from all sides a self-contained, complete and formally perfect picture of the subject.

Assyrian art passes through something like a naturalistic development very late, certainly not until the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. The battle and hunting reliefs of Ashur-bani-pal are, at least as far as the animals represented are concerned, excitingly natural and alive, but the human figures are still portrayed just as rigidly and still appear in the same stiff, decorated and old-fashioned hair and bear dress as 2,000 years before. This is a similar case of stylistic dualism as in Egypt in the age of Akhenaton and shows the same difference in the treatment of the human and animal figures as was observed as early as the Old Stone Age and which can be seen again and again in the course of the history of art. The Palaeolithic age portrayed animals more naturalistically than man because in that world everything revolved around the animal; later ages often do the same because they do not consider the animal worthy of stylized treatment.

6. CRETE

Cretan art presents the sociologist with the most difficult problem in the whole field of Ancient-Oriental art. It not only holds a special position of its own beside Egyptian and Mesopotamian art, but it is an exceptional case in the whole development from the end of the Palaeolithic age until the beginning of the classical age in Greece. In all this vast period in which the abstract geometric style predominated, in this unchanging world of strict traditionalism and rigid forms, Crete presents us with a picture

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of colourful, unrestrained, exuberant life, although economic and social conditions are no different here than anywhere else in the surrounding world. Here too despots and feudal landlords are in power, here too the whole culture is under the aegis of an aristocratic social order, exactly as in Egypt and Mesopotamia—and yet what a difference in the whole conception of art! What freedom in artistic life in contrast to the oppressive conventionalism in the rest of the Ancient-Oriental world! How can this difference be explained? There are several possible explanations, but there is no one perfect, compelling explanation, no doubt owing, first of all, to the hitherto undecipherable nature of Cretan writing. Perhaps the difference lies partly in the comparatively subordinate rôle which religion and religious worship played in public life in Crete. No temple buildings and no monumental statues of gods of any kind have been found here; the small idols and cultic symbols which have been found suggest that religion exerted a much less deep and comprehensive influence than elsewhere in the ancient East. But the freedom of Cretan art can also be partly explained by the extraordinarily important rôle which city life and commerce played in the island's economy. It is true that we find a similar predominance of commercial interests in Babylonia without any observable influence on the world of art, but city life was probably nowhere so highly developed as in Crete. There was a great variety of urban community-types: beside the capital and the seat of the court, Cnossus and Phaestus, there were typical industrial cities like Guernia and little market towns like Praesus.³⁴ But the special character of Cretan art must be seen first of all in relation to the fact that, in the Aegean, in contrast to other areas, trade, above all foreign trade, was concentrated in the hands of the ruling class. The unstable spirit of the trader, fond of making innovations, was able to make its way less hampered than in Egypt or Babylonia.

Of course, even this art is still the art of a court and an aristocracy. It expresses the *joie de vivre*, the good living and the self-indulgence of autocrats and a small upper class. The monuments which have come down to us bear witness to luxurious ways of life, to the glories of the royal household, splendid country seats, wealthy cities, great latifundia and also to the misery of the

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broad masses of an enslaved peasantry. It has, as in Egypt and Babylonia, a thoroughly courtly character, but the rococo element, the delight in the sophisticated and the amusing, the delicate and the elegant, comes more to the fore. Hoernes is right to emphasize the chivalrous features of Minoan culture by drawing attention to the part played by festive processions and festival plays, public combats and tournaments, by women and their coquettish manners in Cretan life.³⁵ This courtly-chivalrous style makes it easier for less rigid, more spontaneous and more flexible forms of life to develop, in contrast to the strict mode of life of the old predatory land-owning barons—a process which recurred in the Middle Ages—and produces, to accord with these new patterns of life, a more individualistic, stylistically freer art expressing more unprejudiced delight in nature.

But according to another interpretation, Cretan art is really no more naturalistic than, for example, Egyptian art; if it makes a more natural impression, then, presumably, it is not so much the stylistic methods employed which are responsible as the bold choice of subject-matter, the abandonment of the officially solemn subjects and the fondness for more secular and episodic, everyday and dynamic motifs.³⁶ The 'chance arrangement' of the elements of the composition, which is mentioned in the same connection as an essential characteristic of the Cretan style, shows, however, that it is not merely a question of the choice of subject-matter. This 'chance arrangement', this freer, looser, more pictorial composition, is the expression of a freedom of invention which may perhaps best be described as 'European', in contrast to the Oriental restrictions of Egyptian and Babylonian art, and of a conception which, in contrast to the principle of concentration and subordination, favours an accumulation and abundance of thematic material.³⁷ The fondness for mere juxtaposition goes so far in Cretan art that we find everywhere a widely luxuriant growth of scattered motifs not only in the scenic compositions but also in the ornamental paintings on vases, instead of geometrically arranged decorations.³⁸ And this freedom from formal constraint is all the more significant, since the Cretans were in fact, as we know, very well acquainted with the productions of Egyptian art; if they, therefore, abandoned its monumentality, solemnity and severity,

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that is evidence that the grandeur of Egypt was not in accordance with their own taste and artistic aims.

Nevertheless, Cretan art also has its anti-naturalistic conventions and abstract formulae: it almost always neglects perspective, there is a complete lack of shadow, colouring is mostly limited to local colours and the forms of the human figure are always more stylized than those of animals. The relationship between the naturalistic and anti-naturalistic elements is, however, by no means predetermined from the outset, but changes with the historical evolution of the art.³⁹ Always keeping close to nature, Cretan art returns from a predominantly geometrical formalism, probably still influenced by Neolithic tendencies, by way of an extreme naturalism, to an archaistic and somewhat academic stylization. Not until the middle of the second millennium, at the close of the middle Minoan period, does Crete discover its own naturalistic style and reach the climax of its development in the sphere of art. Then, in the second half of the millennium, Cretan art loses much of its freshness and naturalness, its forms become more and more schematic and conventional, stiff and abstract. Those scholars who incline to racial explanation of historical phenomena like to attribute this geometrization to the influence of the Hellenic tribes invading the Greek mainland from the North, that is to say, of the same people who also created the later geometric style in Greece.⁴⁰ Others dispute the need for such an ethnic explanation and see the reasons for this change in style in the historical evolution of form.⁴¹

It is a common habit to draw attention to the 'modernity' of Cretan art as its special characteristic when compared with Egyptian and Mesopotamian art; this is, however, its most problematical feature. The taste of the Cretans was not particularly fastidious and stable, for all their originality and virtuosity. Their artistic means are too complaisant and obvious to leave behind a deep and lasting impression. Their frescoes remind us, with their watery colours and straightforward drawing, of the decorations in modern luxury steamers and swimming baths.⁴² Crete not only stimulated 'modernist' art, it even anticipated certain aspects of modern industrial art. The 'modernity' of the Cretans was probably connected with their factory-like pursuit of art and their

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mass production for an enormous export market. On the other hand, the Greeks avoided the danger of standardization despite an equally advanced industrialization—but this only proves that in the history of art the same causes by no means always have the same effects or that the causes are perhaps all too numerous to be completely exhausted by scientific analysis.

CHAPTER III

GREECE AND ROME

1. THE HEROIC AND THE HOMERIC AGES

THE Homeric epics are the oldest poems in Greek that survive, but certainly not the oldest there were. It is not merely that their structure is too complicated and that we can point to contradictions in their contents; the legend of Homer himself contains many features incompatible with the portrait of the poet which we should construct from the sophisticated, sceptical and even frivolous spirit of the poems. The traditional picture of the blind old singer of Chios is largely made up of memories that go back to the time when a poet was a *vates*—a priestly and God-inspired seer. His blindness is merely the outward sign of the inward light that fills his being and enables him to see things others cannot see. This bodily infirmity expresses—as does the lameness of the divine smith Hephaestus—a second idea that was current in primitive times, that a maker of poems, ornaments and other products of handicraft can only come from the ranks of those who are unfit for war and foray. But apart from this feature, the legendary ‘Homer’ is an almost perfect example of the mythical poet who was still half-divine, a wonder-worker and a prophet. We find the clearest embodiment of this idea in Orpheus, the primeval singer who had his harp from Apollo and instruction in the art of song from the Muse herself; with his music he could move not merely men and beasts but even rocks and could reclaim Eurydice from the bonds of death. ‘Homer’ no longer boasts such magical power, but still retains the features of an inspired seer and remains conscious of a mysterious and sacred intimacy with the Muse whom he so confidently invokes.

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We can be sure that the poetry of the earliest Greeks, like that of all other peoples at a primitive stage, consisted of magic formulæ, oracular sayings, prayers and charms, songs of war and work. All these types have something in common; they may be termed the ritual poetry of the masses. It never occurred to the makers of charms and oracular verses, the composers of dirges and war-chants, to create anything individual; their poetry was essentially anonymous and intended for the whole community; it expressed ideas and feelings that were common to all. In the visual arts we find on the level corresponding to this impersonal ritual poetry the fetishes, stones and tree-trunks, which the Greeks revered in their temples from the earliest times and which can hardly be called sculptures, so slight are the vestiges of human shape. These, too, like the oldest charms and hymns, are primitive community art, the rude and clumsy artistic expression of a society that knows scarcely any differentiation of classes. We know nothing about the social position of their makers, the part they played in the life of the group or the repute they enjoyed with their contemporaries; but the probability is that they were less highly esteemed than the artist-magicians of the Palæolithic or the priestly singers of the Neolithic age. It may be remarked that the sculptors also had their mythical ancestors. Daedalus, we are told, could bring wood to life and make stones walk; that he made wings for himself and his son to fly over the sea appears to the narrator of the legend no more miraculous than his power of carving figures and designing labyrinths. He is by no means the only artist-magician, but it may be that he was the last important one, since the conception of Icarus' wings and his falling into the sea seems to symbolize the ending of the age of magic.

With the beginning of the heroic age, the social function of poetry and the social position of the poet changed completely. The secular and individualistic outlook of the warlike upper class gives poetry a new content and assigns new tasks to the poet. He now abandons his anonymity and his priestly aloofness and poetry loses its ritual and collective character. The kings and nobles of the Achæan principalities of the twelfth century B.C., the 'heroes' who gave its name to this age, are robbers and pirates—they are

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proud to call themselves 'plunderers of cities'—and their songs are worldly and profane; the tale of Troy, the crown of their fame, is nothing more than the poetical glorification of freebooting and piracy. Their lawless and irreverent spirit is the outcome of the continuous state of war in which they found themselves, of the train of victories which they achieved and the abrupt changes of cultural level which they experienced. Victors over a more civilized folk than themselves and exploiters of a far more advanced culture than their own, they became emancipated from the ties of their ancestral religion while despising the religious precepts and prohibitions of the conquered people, just because they are the conquered.¹ Thus the life of these restless warriors becomes one of unruly individualism which sets itself above all tradition and all law. Everything for them is a prize to be fought for, an object for personal adventures, since in their world everything depends on personal strength, courage, skill and cunning.

From a sociological point of view, the age is characterized by the decisive turn which is now taken away from the primeval clan organization and towards the social system of a feudal monarchy relying on the personal loyalty of vassals to their lord. This system, so far from depending upon, actually ran counter to kinship relations and in principle overrides the duties of the kin to one another. The social ethics of feudalism reject the solidarity of blood and race; the moral ties become individual and rational.² The gradual dissolution of the tribal unit is strikingly shown in the conflicts between kin which seem to be more and more frequent as the heroic age advances. The loyalties of vassals to their lord, of subjects to their king and of citizens to their city emerge gradually and finally become stronger than the voice of the blood. This process continues over several centuries and finds its conclusion, though with some interruptions from aristocracies basing themselves on family solidarity, only with the victory of democracy. Classical tragedy is still permeated with the conflict between the clan state and the popular state; the *Antigone* of Sophocles revolves round the very same problem of loyalty which was central to the *Iliad*. In the heroic age this problem does not rise to the level of tragic conflict since it is not linked with any crisis in the current order of society; what we see is a revaluation

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of moral standards and ultimately the victory of a ruthless individualism for which the freebooters' code of honour is the only valid standard.

In consequence, the poetry of the heroic age is no longer folk poetry for the masses; we do not find songs or hymns for groups, but individual songs about the fate of individuals. Poetry no longer has the task of rousing men to battle but rather of entertaining the heroes after the battle is over; it has to sing their praises, to name them by name, to spread and perpetuate their glory. In fact the heroic lay owes its origin to the warlike nobles' thirst for glory; to satisfy this is its principle task—any other merits are of secondary importance in the eyes of the audience. To a certain extent it must be recognized that all ancient art is a response to a desire for fame and to the wish to be renowned in the eyes of contemporaries and posterity.³ The story of Herostratus who set fire to the temple of Diana at Ephesus to make his name immortal gives an idea of the undiminished power, even in later times, of this passion, which, however, was never so creative as in the heroic age. The poets of the heroic songs are bestowers of praise and fame; this is the basis of their existence and the source of their inspiration. The subjects of their poetry are no longer hopes and wishes, magical ceremonies or animistic rites, but tales of successful encounters and bloody war. With the disappearance of its ritual function, poetry loses its lyrical character and becomes epic; in this mood it gives birth to the oldest European poetry we know of, which is secular and independent of religion. In fact these poems originate in a kind of war report, a chronicle of how the war is going. At first they probably confined themselves to the 'latest news' of the successful warlike enterprises and the profitable forays of the tribe. 'The newest song gets the loudest applause', says Homer (*Od.* I, 351, 2) and makes his Demodokos and Phemios sing of the latest events of the day. But his singers are no longer mere chroniclers, for the war report has meantime become a mixture of history and saga and taken on the style of the ballad, mingling dramatic and lyric elements with the epic. No doubt this was already the case with the heroic lays, the bricks of which the epics are built, though in their case the epic element was the characteristic one.

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The heroic lay not merely recounts the deeds of an individual person, it is also recited by an individual person, not by a community or chorus.^{3a} Originally it was probably composed and recited by the warriors and heroes themselves; that is to say, both audience and author belonged to the master caste and were noble, sometimes even princely amateurs. The scene portrayed in *Beowulf*, in which the Danish king calls on one of his thanes to sing a song about the fight they have just been through, no doubt holds generally good of conditions in the Greek heroic age.⁴ But the rôle of the noble amateur is soon taken over by a professional—the court poet and singer or bard—who through long practice can give a more artistic and so more effective rendering of the heroic lay. Like Demodokos at the court of the Phaeacian king and Phemios in the palace of Odysseus, they sing their lays at the common tables of the kings and their chieftains. They are professional singers, but at the same time vassals and retainers of the king, and though employed for reward they hold an honourable position. They belong to the court society and are treated as equals by the heroes. They live the secular life of the court, and though they still sometimes claim that the God put these songs into their soul (*Od.* XXII, 347,8) and cherish memories of the divine origin of their art, they are as well versed in the rough trade of war as their hearers are; in fact they have more in common with them than with their own spiritual ancestors, the seers and magicians of an earlier age.

The picture of the social position of the poet which we get from the Homeric poets is not consistent. One singer belongs to the retinue of the prince while the other is something between a court singer and a folk singer.⁵ It would seem that there is a confusion between the conditions of an earlier age and of the 'Homeric Age' itself, when the poems were compiled and edited. At any rate, we may suppose that even in the early days there were, besides the bards of the aristocratic court society, wandering singers as well, who entertained folk in the market places and round the fires in the *λέσχαι* with songs of a less heroic and dignified character.⁶ We can form no notion of these, unless we assume that anecdotes such as the adultery of Aphrodite originated in this way.⁷

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In the plastic arts, the Achaeans continue the Cretan and Mycenaean tradition, and the social position of the artist cannot have been very different from that of the artist-craftsman in Crete. At any rate, it is inconceivable that a sculptor or painter could ever have sprung from the nobility or belonged to court society. In fact, the essays of princes and nobles in poetry and the familiarity of the professional poets with the practice of war were bound to increase the social distance between the artist who worked with his hands and the poet who worked with his brains. This new circumstance is the chief cause of the higher social standing of the poet in the heroic age, compared with that of the scribe in the ancient East.

The Dorian invasion brings the end of the age in which war-like enterprises and adventures are immediately translated into song and saga. The Dorians were a rude and sober-minded peasant folk who made no songs about their victories, and the 'heroic' people they drove out are no longer so keen on adventure after they have settled on the coast of Asia Minor. Their military monarchies become peaceful agricultural and commercial aristocracies in which the former kings are merely great landlords, and whereas formerly the princes and their retinues could lead expensive lives at the cost of the rest of the community, wealth is now more widely distributed and the display of the upper classes is correspondingly diminished.⁸ They are content with a more modest style of living and the commissions which they give to sculptors and painters in their new homeland are at first no doubt on a quite petty scale. All the more splendid is the poetical production of the time. The refugees took their heroic lays with them to Ionia where, in the midst of foreign peoples and under the influence of foreign cultures, the epic emerges over the course of three centuries. Under the final Ionic form, we can still detect the older Aeolic material, can distinguish the various sources and note the varying quality of the different parts and the abruptness of some of the transitions, but we do not know just how much of its artistic quality the epic owes to the heroic lay nor how the merit of this incomparable achievement should be apportioned between individuals, schools and generations of poets. Above all, we do not know whether some one person or

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other deliberately took up the collective work and stamped it with its final shape, or whether, on the contrary, it is just the embodiment in the poems of so many distinct *trouvailles* and the constant recapitulation of and improvement upon tradition which gives them their special, indeed unique character as products of 'collective genius'.

Poetical creation, which in the heroic age, through the differentiation of the poet from the priest, had taken on a more personal form and was the work of separate and independent individuals, now once again shows a decided tendency towards the collective. The epic is no longer the work of individual poets but of whole schools and even, it may be said, of guilds. It is the creation, not indeed of a folk community, but at least of group work, that is, of a group of artists who recognize their spiritual solidarity and are united by common traditions and methods of working. Thus there begins a new kind of organization which hitherto had only been found in the visual arts and which was quite alien to the older poetry: division of labour between pupils and teachers, masters and assistants now enters the field of literature.

The bard sang his songs in the king's hall before a princely and noble audience; the rhapsode recites from the epics at the seats of the nobility and the great houses, and also at festivals and fairs, in workshops and in the *λέσχαι*. As this poetry becomes more popular and addresses itself to a wider public, so the style of delivery becomes less and less formal and approaches that of everyday speech; the staff and recitation take the place of the harp and singing. This process of popularization only reaches its completion when the saga, in its new epic form, returns to the mainland and is there spread abroad by the rhapsodes, embellished by the epigoni and finally transmuted by the tragedians. Recitation of the epics becomes a regular custom with the age of the Tyrants and the beginnings of democracy. Already, in the sixth century, a law required the recitation of the complete poems of Homer—presumably by relays of rhapsodes—at the four-yearly festival of the Panathenaeas. The bard declared the glory of the kings and their vassals, the rhapsode that of the nation's past. The bard sang of current events while the rhapsode con-

jured up the events of history and saga. The composition of poetry and its recitation were still not separate, specialized callings, but the reciter was not, as formerly, necessarily the poet.⁹ The rhapsode is something between a poet and an actor; the many dialogues which are put in the mouths of characters in the epics, and which necessarily required some histrionic skill in the reciter, form the bridge between the recitation of an epic and the performance of a drama.¹⁰ The Homer of the legend is somewhere between Demodokos and the Homeridai, between the bards and the rhapsodes. He is at once a priestly seer and a wandering minstrel, son of the Muse and mendicant. His figure lacks definition and is nothing but a summing-up and personification of the development from the heroic lay of the Achaean princes to the Ionian epic.

In all probability the rhapsodes could write; for though at a much later date there were still people who could recite the whole of Homer by heart, recitation alone without any written basis would have gradually brought about complete dissolution of the epics. We must imagine the rhapsodes rather as trained and accomplished literary men who were more concerned to preserve than to add to the store of their poetry. The very fact that they are called 'sons of Homer' and clung to the legend of their descent from the master shows the conservative and clannish character of their school. It has, indeed, been asserted that the titles of the guilds, such as Homeridai, Asklepiadia, Daidalidai, etc., are to be regarded simply as arbitrary symbols, and that their members neither themselves believed, nor expected anyone else to believe in a common descent;¹¹ others have maintained that guilds generally have their origin in kinship and that the various trades were all originally the monopoly of different clans.¹² However that may be, the rhapsodes formed a closed profession, marked off from other groups, of highly specialized literati, trained in an ancient tradition and having nothing to do with any such thing as 'folk poetry'. Greek 'folk epic' is a pure invention of romantic philologists; the Homeric poems are anything but 'popular', whether in their final or even in their earlier stages. The finished epics are no longer court poetry, while the heroic lay was just this: its motifs, style and audience and everything

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else about it are of a courtly or knightly character. It is even open to question whether the Greek heroic lay ever became folk poetry as the *Nibelungenlied* did, which after its birth and early development at court was taken among the people by the wandering minstrels and so passed through a folk poetry stage before ultimately taking on the final courtly form in which we know it.¹³ On this view, the Homeric epics were the direct continuation of the poetry of the heroic age;¹⁴ Achaeans and Aeolians took to their new homes not merely the heroic lays but also singers who transmitted direct to the poets of the epics the songs they had formerly sung. The kernel would thus consist, not of popular Thessalian ballads, but of courtly panegyrics intended not for the masses but for the sophisticated ear of connoisseurs, and the heroic lay would have reached the mass of the people only at a very late date, in the form of the completed epic—the first form in which, on this view, it becomes known to the Hellenic people generally. It upsets all romantic conceptions of the nature of art and the artist—conceptions which are the very foundation of nineteenth-century aesthetics—to have to think of the Homeric epics, in all their perfection, as being the product neither of individual nor of folk poetry, but, on the contrary, as an anonymous artistic product of many elegant courtiers and learned literary gentlemen, in which the boundaries between the work of different personalities, schools and generations have become obliterated. This view certainly sets the poems in a new light, but still without yielding the secret of their beauty. The puzzling element in the poems was what the romantics called ‘naïve folk poetry’; for us, it is the creative power of producing out of so many disparate elements—vision and erudition, tradition and inspiration, the original and the borrowed—this unbroken flow of sweet cadences, this solid and consistent world of images, this complete unity of being and meaning.

The atmosphere of the Homeric poems is still thoroughly aristocratic, but no longer strictly feudalistic; it is only the older portions that reflect the age of feudalism. The heroic lay was addressed exclusively to princes and nobles and shows no interest but in them, their manners and ideals. Though the world of the finished epics is no longer so narrowly restricted, the ordinary

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man of the people is still never named and the common soldier is of no consequence. In the whole of Homer there is not a single case of a non-noble rising out of the class he was born in.¹⁵ There is no real criticism in the epics either of kings or aristocracy; Thersites, the only character who rails against the kings, is the very epitome of the boorish person, lacking all cultivation of manners and all the graces of social intercourse. Thus, the outwardly 'bourgeois' features that have been observed in Homer's similes¹⁶ do not, on the whole, reflect any bourgeois spirit. Yet the heroic ideals of the saga are already impaired in the epic. There is already a marked tension between the outlook of the humane poet and the behaviour of his rough heroes. Nor is it only in the *Odyssey* that we meet with the 'unheroic Homer'. It is not merely that Odysseus belongs to a different world from Achilles and one more akin to the poet's own. There are signs that the noble, kindly and generous Hector has displaced the fierce hero of the *Iliad* in the poet's affections.¹⁷ All this merely shows that the outlook of the nobility was changing, not that the poet of the epic derived his moral standards from a new, non-noble public; in any case, they are not written for a warlike landed nobility, but for an unwarlike, town-dwelling aristocracy.

Only when we come to Hesiod do we get a poetry that moves in the world of the peasant. This is not real folk poetry either—it is not a poetry that passes from mouth to mouth, nor such as could compete with bawdy anecdotes round the fire. Still its subjects, standards and ideals are those of the peasants—of people oppressed by the land-owning nobility. The historic significance of Hesiod's work is due to its being the very first literary expression of social tension and of class antagonism. It is true that it advocates conciliation, seeks to calm and console—the time of class warfare is still far off—but it is the first time that the voice of the working people is heard in literature, the first voice to speak up for social justice and against arbitrariness and violence. In short, a poet for the first time takes up a political and educational mission instead of the task which religion and court society had assigned to him, setting up to be a teacher, philosopher and champion of an oppressed class.

It is not easy to establish the historical relationship between

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Homeric poetry and the contemporary geometrical art. The refined and elegant conventions of the epics seem to have no obvious resemblance to the sober and schematic style of this geometrical art. Attempts to find the principles of this art in Homer¹⁸ have hitherto been quite unsuccessful. Apart from the fact that symmetry and repetition, the sole 'geometrical' elements in poetry, can only be found in particular episodes of the Homeric poems, these elements represent but the outermost layer of poetry, whereas in geometrical painting and sculpture they are the very kernel of the whole composition. The explanation of this discrepancy lies in the fact that the epics developed in Asia Minor, the melting pot of the Aegean and Oriental cultures and the centre of world trade at that time. The home of the geometrical style, on the other hand, was on the mainland of Greece, among the Dorian and Boeotian peasants. The style of the Homeric poems is rooted in the speech of an urban and cosmopolitan population; whereas geometrical art is the expression of a country people, a people of farmers and shepherds who have rigorously shut themselves off from foreign influences. Subsequent art is a synthesis of these two tendencies; this, however, is only achieved with the economic unity of all the coasts of the Aegean, at a level of development not attained during the geometrical era.

The early geometrical style at the end of the tenth century, after two centuries of stagnation and barbarism, initiates a new line of development in the West. At first we find everywhere the same heavy, awkward and ugly forms, the same summary and schematic mode of expression, until little by little differentiated local styles everywhere emerge. The best known of these, and that which has most artistic merit, is the Dipylon style which flourished in Attica between 900 and 700—a style already refined and almost mannered, delicate and fluent. It shows how even peasant art, through long and uninterrupted practice, can achieve a sort of preciousness, and how an organic type of ornament, based upon the structure of the object to be decorated, can degenerate into a 'pseudo-tectonic decoration'¹⁹ whose abstract character, arbitrarily or playfully distorting nature, no longer makes any pretence of being derived from the form of the object. For example, there can be seen upon a fragment of a

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Dipylon vase in the Louvre a 'death-bed scene', with the corpse laid out, weeping women around or rather on top of the bed, where they have to form a border, and sorrowing men on each side and below the main picture, which is square and bears no relation to the round form of the vase. All these figures can be taken as you will, either as belonging to the picture or as mere ornament. Finally, the whole is squeezed into a net of crochet-work pattern. The figures are all alike; they are all making the same gesture with their arms, crossing them to form a triangle whose bottom point is the waist of these wasp-waisted and long-legged figures. There is no trace either of depth or of spatial order; the bodies are without volume or weight; all is just surface pattern and play of lines which are frozen into stripes and bands, fields and friezes, squares and triangles—undoubtedly the most violent and uncompromising stylization of reality since Neolithic times, and far more uniform and consistent than anything in Egyptian art.

2. THE ARCHAIC STYLE AND ART AT THE COURTS OF THE TYRANTS

Not until 700 B.C., when urban forms of life begin even on the mainland to supplant those of a peasant society, does the rigidity of the geometrical forms begin to relax. The new archaic style, which now succeeds the geometrical, originates in a synthesis of the styles of East and West, of urbanized Ionia, on the one hand, and the still almost completely agricultural mainland, on the other. Between the end of the Mycenaean and the beginning of the archaic period in Greece, neither palaces nor temples were erected, nor is there monumental art of any kind; we possess nothing from this period but the slight remains of an art that was wholly restricted to the field of pottery. But with the archaic style, the product of a flourishing commerce and wealthy towns and successful colonization, a new period of monumental sculpture and architecture begins. This is the art of a society whose élite has risen from the level of peasants to that of city magnates, of an aristocracy which is beginning to spend its rents in the towns

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and take part in industry and trade. This art shows nothing of the narrow and static outlook of the peasant. It is urban, not merely in the monumental tasks it undertakes, but in its distaste for tradition and its susceptibility to foreign influences. Admittedly, it is still governed by a number of formal principles, above all the principles of frontality and symmetry, of cubic form and the 'four fundamental aspects' (E. Loewy), so that the geometrical style can hardly be said to have completely ended until the classical style has begun. But within these limitations, the trends of the archaic style are very varied and make a big step towards naturalism. Both the elegant, clever, artistic style of the Ionian Korai and the massive, powerful, dynamic forms of early Dorian sculpture, in spite of all their archaic clumsiness, are aiming all the time at an expansion and differentiation of the means of expression available to the artist. In the East, the Ionic element prevailed; all the development is in the direction of refinement, virtuosity and formalism; its ideal is realized in the courtly art of the Tyrants. Woman is here, as in Crete, the main subject; the art of the Ionian coasts and islands finds its complete expression in those votive statues of maidens, elegantly clad, with hair carefully dressed, richly bejewelled and decorously smiling, with which, judging by the wealth of finds, the temples must have been filled. It is to be noted that the archaic artists, like their Cretan forerunners, never represent woman naked; they seek their plastic effects not in the nude, form but in costume and in an intimation of the body under its clinging robes. The aristocracy disliked representations of the nude which is 'democratic like death' (Julius Lange); at first even the male nude was tolerated only, it seems, as propaganda for the athletic games, for their cult of the body and their myth of blood. Olympia, where these statues of young men were put up, was certainly the most valuable propaganda site in Greece, since it was here that the public opinion of the whole country and the sense of national unity promoted by its aristocracy were formed.

The archaic art of the sixth and seventh centuries B.C. is the art of a nobility which was still very rich and in complete control of the machinery of government, but whose political and economic position was already threatened. The process by which it was

deposed from its economic leadership by the urban bourgeoisie, and its rents in kind devalued owing to the huge profits made in the new money economy, was going on continuously during the archaic era. Only in this critical situation does the aristocracy first become conscious of its essential characteristics;²⁰ it now begins to emphasize its special traits of character as a compensation for its evident inferiority in the economic struggle. Racial and class characteristics, which hardly came into its consciousness because they were simply taken for granted, are now claimed to be special virtues and excellences justifying special privileges. It now sets out, in the hour of danger, a programme of life which would never have been laid down so positively or indeed followed out so strictly in times when this manner of life was still materially secure. It is now that the foundations of the ethics of nobility are laid: the conception of *areté* with its dominant traits of physical fitness and military discipline, built up on a tradition, birth and race; of *kalokagathia*, the ideal of a right balance between bodily and spiritual, physical and moral qualities; of *sophrosýne*, the ideal of self-restraint, discipline and moderation.

While the epics still find appreciative audiences and eager imitators on the mainland as well as in the islands, the native choral and reflective lyric, with its direct bearing upon the problem of the hour, naturally had a greater appeal to a nobility that was fighting for its existence than the old-fashioned heroic saga. From the outset, gnomic poets such as Solon, elegists such as Tyrtaeus and Theognis, composers of choral works like Simonides and Pindar, offered the nobles earnest moral teachings, advice and warnings, instead of amusing tales of adventure. Their poetry is at once the expression of personal feelings, political propaganda and moral philosophy, and the poets are not entertainers but spiritual leaders both of the nobility and of the nation. Their task is that of keeping the nobles alive to their perilous position and not allowing them to forget their former greatness. Theognis, the enthusiastic panegyrist of the ethics of noblesse, is perhaps the poet who expresses the deepest disgust for the new plutocracy, contrasting its plebeian meanness with the noble virtues of magnificence and generosity; but even in his work we can note the crisis which the *areté* ideal was facing, for, though with pro-

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found distaste, he advises his hearers to adapt themselves to the requirements of the new commercial society, and so undermines the whole fabric of aristocratic morality. The crisis which now looms is at the bottom of Pindar's tragic outlook on the world. It is the source from which this greatest of the noble poets draws his inspiration—indeed, the source of Greek tragedy itself. The tragedians, it is true, could only take possession of Pindar's estate after they had purged it of its dross—his narrow cult of the great families, his one-sided ideal of sport, his 'compliments to gymnasts and grooms'²¹—had freed the tragic conception of life from Pindar's narrowness so that it could appeal to their wider and more composite public.

Pindar still writes for the exclusive circle of his fellow nobles, whom, though unquestionably earning his living as a professional poet, he still treats as his equals. By pretending that he is merely speaking his mind and that, though he may desire reward, he could equally work without it, he gives the impression of being an amateur who composes poetry simply for his own pleasure and with the welfare of his fellow nobles at heart. Due to this fictitious amateurishness, it may seem at first sight as if the trend towards professionalism in poetry was being reversed, whereas in reality it is just at this time that the decisive step towards literary professionalism is taken. Simonides writes poetry to order for a definite sum and for anyone who will pay him; he offers his gifts for sale exactly as the Sophists later did their arguments—their forerunner in the very particular for which they were most despised.²² There were, it is true, among the aristocrats some real amateurs who occasionally composed and took part in the choral performances, but in general both the poets and the performers of the choral lyrics were professional artists, and these two classes were more sharply differentiated than was the case in former times. Whereas the rhapsodes were both poets and reciters, these functions are now separated—the poet no longer sings and the singer is no longer the author. Perhaps the most striking result of this division of labour is to show how the singer is looked upon merely as a skilled workman; no vestige of amateur status attaches to him as it does to the poet, who is still supposed to believe in what he writes. The choral singers

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form a widespread and well-organized profession so that poets can send out for performance lyrics they have been commissioned to write on the assumption that this will not meet with undue technical difficulties anywhere. Just as today a conductor can expect to find a tolerable orchestra in any big town, so in Greece at that date a poet could count upon finding a trained choir, whether for public or private festivities. These choirs were maintained by the noble families and were an instrument that was completely under their control.

The forms of contemporary sculpture and painting are equally determined by the ethics of nobility and the aristocratic ideal of bodily and spiritual beauty, even if this is perhaps not so evident as in the poetry. The statues, usually catalogued as 'Apollon', of young nobles who had won a victory in the Olympic Games, or the figures such as those of the Aegina pediments, with their pride of bodily vigour and their noble carriage, are the perfect counterpart of the aristocratic heroizing style and the old-fashioned aloofness of Pindar. The same manly ideal based on the conception of life as a contest (*agon*), the same typical product of aristocratic breeding and all-round athletic training, forms the subject of sculpture and poetry alike. Participation in the Olympic Games was a preserve of the nobles; they alone possessed the means required for the training and for the competition itself. The first list of victors dates from the year 776 B.C., but the first statue of a victor, according to Pausanias, was dedicated in 536 B.C. Between these dates the aristocracy was at its best. May we conclude that the statues of victors were introduced to spur on the weaker, less ambitious, less spirited generations that succeeded them?

The statues of athletes do not aim to be individual likenesses; they are idealized portraits whose sole purpose, it seems, was to preserve the memory of the particular victory and to make propaganda for the games. Probably in many cases the artist had never seen the victor and had to base his portrait upon a cursory description of the subject;²³ Pliny's remark that athletes had a claim to have a portrait-likeness after their third victory must refer to later times. There is no reason to think that any of the statues erected during the archaic period were ever 'likenesses'; but later on it is quite possible that the Greeks made the same

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distinction that we make today, when a small prize is usually something quite impersonal but a big prize is engraved with the name of the winner and the details of the competition. In any case, the notion of a portrait in our sense was quite unfamiliar during the archaic period of Greek art, in spite of the considerable progress towards individualism which was made during this period.

With the development of commerce and of urban society, and with the triumph of the idea of competitive economy, individualism becomes prominent in all fields of cultural life. It is true that the economy of the ancient East had also developed along urban lines and was also based in the main upon trade and industry, but this was either the monopoly of the royal and temple treasuries or was controlled in such a way as to leave little room for individual competition. In Ionia and mainland Greece, on the other hand, there was free competition, at least between the free citizens. The beginning of this economic individualism marks the end of the compilation of the epics and the beginning of a subjective trend in poetry, with predominance of the lyric. This trend shows itself not merely in the subject matter, which in the lyrics is normally of a more personal character than in epic, but also in a new claim of the poet to be recognized as the author of his poems. The idea of intellectual private property now appears on the scene and takes root. The poetry of the rhapsodes was a collective achievement, the common and indivisible possession of school, guild or group. None of them ever regarded the poems he recited as his own personal property. The poets of the archaic era, not merely those, like Alcaeus and Sappho, who wrote lyrics of personal feeling, but also the writers of reflective and choral lyrics, addressed their public in the first person. The established types of poetry now dissolve into a host of individual styles; in each work it is the poet expressing his own feelings directly or making a direct address to his public.

At about the same time, 700 B.C., we find the first signed works of visual art—beginning with the vase of 'Aristonothos', which is the oldest signed work of art in existence. In the sixth century a type of man appears on the scene who was hitherto practically unknown—the artist with a markedly individual

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personality.²⁴ Neither in the prehistoric nor in the early Oriental epochs, nor during the geometrical period of Greek art, was there anything like an individual style or personal ideals or ambitions—at any rate, there is no sign whatever that the artist cherished any feelings of this sort. Soliloquies such as the poems of Archilochus or Sappho, the claim to be distinguished from all other artists which is advanced by Aristonothos, attempts to say something already said in a different, though not necessarily better fashion—all this is quite new and heralds a development which now proceeds without a set-back (apart from the early Middle Ages) to the present day.

There was, however, strong opposition to be overcome in the Dorian lands. Aristocracy in general does not favour individualism; it bases its claim to privilege upon virtues which are common to the whole class or at least to whole clans. And the Dorian nobility of the archaic period was specially disinclined to individualistic impulses and ideals, in contrast, in particular, with the nobility of the heroic age or of the Ionian commercial centres. The hero covets fame, the trader gain; both are individualistic; but for the Dorian landed gentry the former heroic ideals had lost their power while the pursuit of money and profit inspired in them fear rather than hope. It is thus only natural that they should have retired behind the traditions of their class and tried to hold up the onrush of individualism.

The Tyrants who, at the end of the seventh century, had everywhere gained control, first in the leading Ionian states and then on the mainland, signify a decisive victory for individualism over the ideology of kinship. In this respect, as in others, they form the bridge to democracy, many of whose conquests they anticipate, for all their own undemocratic character. Though their system of centralized monarchy harks back to pre-aristocratic days, they set themselves to undermine the clan state. They set limits to the exploitation of the people by the noble families and they completed the transformation of the old home production for subsistence into commercial production for sale—so completing the triumph of the tradesman over the landlord. The Tyrants themselves are wealthy and usually well-born merchants who take advantage of the ever more frequent conflicts

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between the possessing and the proletarian classes, oligarchy and peasantry, in order to seize political power by the adroit use of their wealth. They are merchant princes who maintain a court as splendid as that of the pirate princes of the heroic age, and even richer in artistic attractions. They are connoisseurs, and as such have properly been called the forerunners of the Renaissance princes and the 'first of the Medici'.²⁵ Like the usurpers in the Italian Renaissance, they seek to gloss over the illegitimacy of their rôle by offering tangible advantages and making a fine show;²⁶ that explains their economic liberalism and their patronage of the arts. They employ art not merely as a means to fame and a propaganda instrument but also as an opiate to soothe the opposition. The fact that their art policy is often accompanied by a true love and understanding of art does not affect its social basis. The courts of the Tyrants are the most important cultural centres of the age and its greatest repositories of artistic production. Almost all the important poets are in their service—at the court of Hiero at Syracuse we find Bacchylides, Pindar, Epicharmus and Aeschylus; Simonides is with Pisistratus in Athens; Anacreon is the court poet of Polycrates of Samos; Arion, of Periander of Corinth. Yet in spite of this activity at the courts, the art of the age of the Tyrants is not entirely a product of the court; the rationalistic and individualistic spirit of the age hindered the development of that solemn pageantry and those conventional forms which are characteristic of a court style. The only features in this art that we can ascribe to the court are its joy in the senses, its refined intellectuality, and its somewhat artificial elegance of expression—all features to be found in the older Ionian tradition but developed to a still higher degree at the courts of the Tyrants.²⁷

If we compare the art of the Tyrants with that of former ages, the most striking thing about it is the slightness of religious motive. Its creations seem to have shaken off all hieratic connections and to stand in a merely external relationship to religion. They may be called cult statues, votive offerings or funeral monuments, but their ritual employment is the merest pretext for their existence. Their real aim and object is to achieve the perfect presentation of the human body, an interpretation of its beauty,

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a comprehension of its sensible form, free of all magical or symbolic implications. The setting up of the statues of athletes may have had some connection with religious ritual, the Ionian maidens may have served as votive offerings, but one only needs to look at them to convince oneself that they have nothing to do with religious feeling and very little with cult traditions. Compare them with any work of Ancient-Oriental art and you will realize the freedom, even the wilfulness, of their conception. In the ancient East a work of art, be it in the form of God or man, is a requisite of religious ritual. Illustrations of the most trivial everyday scenes are intimately related to faith in immortality and worship of the dead. This relationship between art and cult, though never so intimate, is found for a while in Greek art; the most ancient Greek works may really have been just votive offerings, as Pausanias surprisingly remarks of the Acropolis sculptures in general.²⁸ But in the late archaic period, the former intimate relationship between art and religion is dissolved and the production of secular works is constantly on the increase at the cost of religious. Religion lives and has its influence, even though art is no longer its servant; in fact, the age of the Tyrants is the scene of a religious renaissance which on all sides throws up new ecstatic confessions of faith, new secret cults and new sects; but at first these develop underground and do not as yet reach the light of art. Thus we no longer find art being commissioned and stimulated by religion, but, on the contrary, we find in this period religious zeal being inspired by the increased skill of the artist. The custom of offering to the Gods representations of living beings as votive gifts draws new life from the artist's new power of making these more imposing, more attractive and truer to nature, and so more pleasing to the Gods.²⁹ The temples now begin to be filled with sculptures, but the artist is no longer dependent upon the priests, is not under their tutelage, and does not receive commissions from them; his patrons are now the cities, the Tyrants and, for less expensive works, wealthy private individuals also. The works which he executes for them are not expected to have magical or saving power, and even when they serve a sacred purpose, they make no claim whatever to be sacred themselves.

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We here meet a completely new conception of art; it is no longer a means towards an end, but an end in itself. At its origin, every form of spiritual endeavour is entirely determined by the useful purpose it serves; but such forms have the power and tendency to break free from their original purpose and make themselves independent; they become purposeless and to some extent autonomous. As soon as man feels secure and free from the immediate pressure of the struggle for life, he begins to play with the spiritual resources which he had originally developed as weapons and tools to aid him in his necessity. He begins enquiring into causes, seeking for explanations, researching into connections which have little or nothing to do with his struggle for life. Practical knowledge gives place to free enquiry, means for the mastery of nature become methods for discovering abstract truth. And thus art, originally a mere handmaid of magic and ritual, an instrument of propaganda and panegyric, a means to influence gods, spirits and men, becomes a pure, autonomous, 'disinterested' activity to some extent, practised for its own sake and for the beauty it reveals. In the same way, the commands and prohibitions, the duties and taboos, which were originally just expedients to make a common life in society possible, give rise to a doctrine of ethics that sets out to realize and perfect the moral personality. The Greeks were the first people to complete this transition from the instrumental to the 'autonomous' form of activity, whether in science, art or morality. Before them there was no free enquiry, no theoretical research, no rational knowledge and no art as we understand art—as an activity whose creations may always be considered and enjoyed as pure forms. This abandonment of the old view that art is only valuable and intelligible as a weapon in the struggle for life, in favour of a new attitude which treats it as mere play of line and colour, mere rhythm and harmony, mere imitation or interpretation of reality—this is the most tremendous change that has ever occurred in the whole history of art.

In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., the Greeks in Ionia, at the same time as they discovered the idea of science as pure research, also created the first works of a pure, purposeless art, the first suggestion of 'l'art pour l'art'. A change of this magnitude, however, does not take place within a single generation or even

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in a period that can be equated with the rule of the Tyrants or with the archaic style. It may be that this change cannot be located in any period of time, that it is the eruption of a primeval impulse whose first intimations are as old as art itself. In the very earliest works of all, for all their magical, ritual or propagandist purposes, we can detect a feature here or there, some particular sketch or variation, which does seem to be free and purposeless, the pure play of a craftsman whose attention wandered for a moment from the practical task in hand. Who in the last resort can be sure how much of an Egyptian statue of a god or king is magic, propaganda or cult, and how much is pure, autonomous, aesthetic creation detached from the struggle for life and the fear of death? But whatever the precise extent of this aesthetic element in the art of prehistoric and early historic times, it remains true that until the Greek archaic period art was essentially utilitarian. Carefree play with forms, the capacity to treat an implement as an end in itself, to use art for displaying, not merely for controlling and influencing reality—all this is a discovery of the Greeks of this age. Even if there is some primeval impulse breaking through, the fact that it now gets the upper hand so that works of art are created for their own sake is very significant indeed, although the allegedly autonomous forms which arise in this way are no doubt sociologically conditioned and may serve a hidden purpose.

The autonomy of the various creative powers of man cannot be achieved without a certain formalizing of his spiritual functions; this begins with a readiness to value spiritual achievements no longer exclusively according to their usefulness for life, but according to an inner perfection of their own. If, for example, one's enemy is admired for his efficiency or his bravery, instead of all qualities that could be injurious to oneself being simply denied to him, that is a step towards the neutralization and formalization of value. The most conspicuous case of this formalization is sport, the play form of the life struggle *par excellence*. But art and science are also play forms, and the same is true in a sense even of morality in so far as a man's morality becomes a pure, self-sufficient achievement of his own, not influenced by any external considerations. With the separation of

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these spiritual functions from one another and from the totality of life, man's original unity of practical wisdom, his indiscriminating knowledge, his rounded world picture, are shattered and split into ethico-religious, scientific and artistic spheres. This autonomy of the different spheres is most strikingly apparent in the Ionian natural philosophy of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. Here, for the first time, we meet with thought forms which are more or less detached from practical considerations and aims. The pre-Greek civilizations also made many correct scientific observations, conclusions and calculations, but all their knowledge and skill was embedded in an atmosphere of magical relationships, mythical imaginations and religious dogma; it never lost sight of the practical purpose in hand. With the Greeks, on the contrary, we find for the first time a science that is not merely rational and free from religious belief and superstition, but which is also free of all thought of any possible utility. In art the boundary between useful and pure form is not so sharply drawn, nor is the change so clearly assignable to a definite locality, but here, too, we may take it that the transformation took place in the Ionian cultural field and during the seventh century. Strictly speaking, however, the Homeric poems also belong to the world of autonomous forms, since they are by no means religion, science and poetry in one, nor a simple agglomeration of the knowledge, science and experience of the time, but are pure, or almost pure poetry. At any rate, the tendency towards autonomy first manifests itself, in art as in science, at the end of the seventh century.

The answer to the question why the change took place just at this time and place is clearly to be found in the effects of colonization and in the reactions which life among foreign peoples and cultures must have had upon the Greeks. The foreigners who surrounded them upon all sides in Asia Minor made them conscious of their own native genius, and this self-consciousness, with its accompanying self-assertion—that is, the discovery and exaggeration of their individual traits—inevitably led them to the idea of spontaneity and autonomy. An eye practised in noticing the culture of different peoples gradually distinguishes the various elements out of which the world view of each people is made up. When the god of fertility, the god of thunder or the god of war

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is found to be portrayed differently by each of these peoples, the mind gradually comes to notice the manner of the representation; possibly it attempts sooner or later to produce something in the foreign manner, yet without having the religious beliefs of the foreigner, in fact without having any belief at all. At this point it is only a step to the conception of independent forms detached from any unitary world view. Consciousness of self—the general realization that I exist independently of the circumstances of the moment—marks man's first great effort of abstraction; the detachment of the various spiritual activities from their function in the totality of his life and the unity of his world view is a second abstraction.

The capacity for abstract thought which leads to the autonomy of spiritual forms is developed not merely by the experience of colonization, but also to a very great extent by the practice of trading for money. This abstract means of exchange and its reduction of the various goods to a common denominator, the division of the original barter of goods into two separate acts of sale and purchase, is a factor accustoming men to abstract thought and making them familiar with the ideas of a common form with various contents, of a common content in various forms. Once content and form are distinguished from one another, the notion that the form can subsist by itself as an independent entity is not far off. The further development of this idea is also linked with the accumulation of wealth in a money economy, and with the specialization of work that results from it. The liberation of certain elements in society for the creation of autonomous, that is, 'useless' and 'unproductive' forms, is a sign of wealth and of surplus energy and leisure. Art only becomes independent of magic and religion, instruction and practice, when the master caste can afford the luxury of paying for 'purposeless' art to be produced.

3. CLASSICAL ART AND DEMOCRACY

Greek classical art faces us with a difficult sociological problem; the liberalism and individualism of democracy would seem

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to be incompatible with the severity and regularity of the classical style. The fact is that, as a detailed investigation will show, classical Athens was not so uncompromisingly democratic nor was its classical art so strictly 'classical' as might have been supposed. In the first place, the fifth century B.C. is one of the epochs in the history of art which have made the most important and fruitful conquests in the field of naturalism. Not merely is this true of the early classical style of the Olympia sculptures and the art of Myron; the whole century shows a joy in nature which, with some short pauses, is continually on the increase. It is precisely the fact that its impulse to be true to nature is almost as strong as its desire for proportion and order which distinguishes Greek classicism from the later classicist styles derived from it. The presence of these two opposed types of artistic impulse exactly corresponds to the division that characterized social and political life at that time and to the inward inconsistency of the democratic ideal in relation to the problem of individualism. Democracy is individualistic in that it gives free reign to competition and the different forces in society, rates each person at his own individual value and spurs him on to the utmost exertions; but it is anti-individualistic in that it levels differences of class and abolishes privileges of birth. It inaugurates a type of culture which is so differentiated that individualism and community spirit can no longer be looked upon as alternatives but are seen to be indissolubly connected. In this complex condition of things, the correct sociological estimation of stylistic factors in art becomes more difficult. The various elements in society cannot be nearly as simply defined in respect of their interests and aims as could the land-owning nobility and the landless peasantry in their former relations with one another. Not merely are the sympathies of the middle class divided; not merely is there an urban bourgeoisie; taking up a middle position between the upper and lower classes, interested in bringing about a democratic levelling, but also in getting new capitalistic advantages for itself; the nobility, too, becomes plutocratic in spirit, loses its old unity and consistency of principle and becomes assimilated to the traditionless and rationalistic bourgeoisie.

Neither Tyrants nor people succeeded in breaking the power

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of the nobility; the clan state was abolished and the basic democratic institutions were introduced, at least in form, but the influence of the nobility remained little impaired. Athens of the fifth century may seem democratic, in comparison with the Oriental despotism, but when compared with modern democracies it looks like a citadel of aristocracy. It was governed in the name of the people, but in the spirit of the nobility. The triumphs and political gains of democracy were mainly achieved by men of aristocratic origin. Miltiades, Themistocles and Pericles all come of old noble families. Not until the last quarter of the century did individuals from the middle class really take a leading part in public affairs, and even then the aristocracy still retained its predominant position. It is true that they had to cloak this predominance and make frequent, though usually only formal concessions to the bourgeoisie. Even this betokened a certain degree of progress, but the political democracy never—even at the end of the century—led to any sort of economic democracy. The only ‘progress’ consisted in the displacement of the aristocracy of birth by an aristocracy of money, of the clan state by a plutocratic rentier state. In the case of Athens there was a further factor. She was an imperialistic democracy, carrying on a policy which gave benefits to the free citizens and the capitalists at the cost of the slaves and those sections of the people who had no share in the war profits. In fact, progress towards democracy meant at most an expansion of the rentier class.

The poets and philosophers had little sympathy for the bourgeoisie, whether wealthy or poor; they supported the nobility even when they themselves were of bourgeois origin. All the spiritual leaders of the fifth and fourth centuries, with the exception of the Sophists and Euripides, are on the side of aristocracy and reaction. Pindar, Aeschylus, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, Herodotus and Thucydides are aristocrats themselves, and the middle-class Sophocles and Plato identify themselves completely with the nobility. Even Aeschylus, who was the most favourably inclined to democracy, at the end of his life attacks the current changes as being in his opinion too radical.³⁰ Even the comedians—although comedy as such is a democratic art³¹—are reactionary in their sentiments. And nothing is more significant

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of the condition of things in Athens than that such an opponent of democracy as Aristophanes not merely constantly won first prize but also achieved great popularity.³²

These conservative tendencies retard the movement towards naturalism but cannot stop it. That the men of the time were well aware of the connection between naturalism and progressive politics, on the one hand, and between formal rigorism and conservatism, on the other, is well seen in the case of Aristophanes; he criticizes Euripides indiscriminately and in the same breath for undermining the old aristocratic ethical ideals and the old 'idealistic' canons of art. Already Sophocles is related by Aristotle to have remarked that he portrayed men as they should be, whereas Euripides portrayed them as they were (*Poet.* 1460b, 35-5). This remark is but a different formulation of Aristotle's own observation that the statues of Polygnotus and the characters of Homer 'are better than we are ourselves' (*Poet.* 1448a, 5-15), so that this alleged dictum of Sophocles may perhaps not be authentic. However that may be, and whether the remark originated with Sophocles, Aristophanes, Aristotle or another, the conception of the classical style as 'idealistic' and of classical art as representing a better, normative world of ethically superior beings is a characteristic expression of the aristocratic frame of mind that prevailed in this age. This aesthetic idealism of the cultured nobility shows itself, above all, in the choice of subjects to be represented. The aristocracy favoured almost exclusively motifs from the old Hellenic myths of gods and heroes; up-to-date subjects from everyday life are felt to be common and trivial. They did not object to a naturalistic style in itself but because it was the obvious style for representing everyday subjects; naturalism seemed detestable to them only when it was applied, as by Euripides, to the great historical sagas, not necessarily when employed in the more popular art forms to whose trivial subjects it seemed appropriate.

Tragedy is the characteristic creation of Athenian democracy; in no form of art are the inner conflicts of its social structure so directly and clearly to be seen as in this. The externals of its presentation to the masses were democratic, but its content, the heroic sagas with their tragi-heroic outlook on life, was aristo-

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cratic. From the first, it is addressed to a more numerous and varied audience than those distinguished companies at whose tables the heroic lays or the epics were recited. On the other hand, it unquestionably propagates the standards of the great-hearted individual, the uncommon distinguished man, the embodiment of the ideal of *kalokagathia*. It owed its origin to the separation of the choir-leader from the choir, which turned collective performance of songs into dramatic dialogue—and this separation by itself marks a trend towards individualism; but, on the other hand, tragedy depends for its effect upon the existence of a sense of community in the audience and upon its appreciation by large masses who are on the same level—it can only really succeed as a mass experience. But even the audience of Greek tragedy is to some extent a selected one; at best it consists of all the free citizens and is not much more democratic in its composition than are the classes which govern the Polis. And the spirit in which the official theatre is managed is far less popular even than the make-up of its public, for the masses that form the audience do not have any decisive influence upon the choice of plays or the distribution of the prizes. The former is naturally in the hands of the rich citizens who have to pay the cost of the performances as a 'special contribution'; the latter is in the hands of judges, who are nothing more than executive officials of the council and whose judgement is determined primarily by political considerations. The free entrance and the payment of allowances for time spent at the theatre (advantages which are customarily praised as the last word in democracy) are just the very factors which completely prevented the masses from having any influence on the fate of the theatre. Only a theatre whose very existence depends upon the shillings paid for entry will really be a 'people's theatre'. The notion, popularized by classicist and romanticist critics alike, of the Attic theatre as the perfect example of a national theatre, and of its audiences as realizing the ideal of a whole people united in support of art, is a falsification of historical truth.³³ The festival theatre of Athenian democracy was certainly no 'people's theatre'—the German classical and romantic theorists could only represent it as such, because they conceived the theatre to be an educational institution. The true 'people's theatre' of ancient

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times was the mime, which received no subvention from the state, in consequence did not have to take instructions from above, and so worked out its artistic principles simply and solely from its own immediate experience with the audiences. It offered its public not artistically constructed dramas of tragi-heroic manners and noble or even sublime personages, but short, sketchy, naturalistic scenes with subjects and persons drawn from the most trivial, everyday life. Here at last we have to do with an art which has been created not merely for the people but also in a sense by the people. Mimers may have been professional actors, but they remained popular and had nothing to do with the educated élite, at least until the mime came into fashion. They came from the people, shared their taste and drew upon their common sense. They wanted neither to educate nor to instruct, but to entertain their audience. This unpretentious, naturalistic, popular theatre was the product of a much longer and more continuous development, and had to its credit a much richer and more varied output than the official classical theatre; unfortunately, this output has been almost completely lost to us. Had these plays been preserved, we should certainly take quite a different view of Greek literature and probably of the whole of Greek culture from that taken now. The mime is not merely much older than tragedy; it is probably prehistoric in origin and directly connected with the symbolic-magical dances, vegetation rites, hunting magic, and the cult of the dead. Tragedy originates in the dithyramb, an undramatic art form, and to all appearances it got its dramatic form—involving the transformation of the performers into fictitious personages and the transposition of the epic past into present—from the mime. In tragedy, the dramatic element certainly always remained subordinate to the lyrical and didactic element; the fact that the chorus was able to survive shows that tragedy was not exclusively concerned to get dramatic effect and so was intended to serve other ends than mere entertainment.

In its festival theatre, the Polis possessed its most valuable instrument of propaganda, and certainly would not think of letting a poet do what he liked with it. The tragedians are in fact state-bursars and state-purveyors—the state pays them for the plays that are performed, but naturally does not allow pieces to

be performed that would run counter to its policy or the interests of the governing classes. The tragedies are frankly tendentious and do not pretend to be otherwise. They treat questions of current politics and centre round problems that all have a direct or indirect connection with the burning questions of the day—the contrast between clan state and popular state. The punishment of Phrynichus, alleged to have been due to his choosing the recent capture of Miletus as the subject of a play, was no doubt due to the fact that his treatment of this subject did not conform to official views, not to his having confounded politics with art.³⁴ Nothing could have been less in line with contemporary conceptions of art than that the theatre should be divorced from all relation to life and politics. Greek tragedy was in the strictest sense ‘political drama’; the finale of *Eumenides*, with its fervent prayers for the prosperity of the Attic state, betrays the main purpose of the piece. This political control of the theatre brought back to currency the old view that the poet is guardian of a higher truth and an educator who leads his people up to a higher plane of humanity. Through the performance of tragedies on the state-ordained festivals and the circumstances that tragedy came to be looked upon as the authoritative interpretation of the national myths, the poet once more attains to a position almost equivalent to that of the priestly seer of prehistoric times.

The inauguration of the cult of Dionysus by Cleisthenes in Sykion was undoubtedly a move in that prince’s political game and intended to supersede the Adrastus cult of the noble families there. The Dionysia introduced by Pisistratus at Athens was a politico-religious festival, with the political factor incomparably more important than the religious one. But the religious institutions and reforms of the Tyrants were undoubtedly based upon genuine popular emotions and needs, and this emotional disposition of the people was partly the cause of their success. Like the Tyrants, democracy also made a great use of religion for the purpose of attaching the masses to the new state. In the formation of this liaison between religion and policy, tragedy proved an excellent mediator, taking up a middle position between religion and art, between the irrational and the rational, the ‘Dionysian’ and ‘Apollonian’ elements. The rational factor, the causal connec-

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tion of the plot, is from the very first almost as fundamental to tragedy as the irrational element—religious awe. But as the classical style matured, the rational element of the plot prevailed more and more, and the irrational became less and less important. Everything that had been confused and dark, mystical and ecstatic, uncontrolled and unconscious, is at last brought into the daylight of experience; the verifiable meaning, the causal connection, the logical motive, is everywhere required to be shown. Drama, the most rationalistic kind of poetry, and that in which adequate and consistent motivation is of the utmost importance, is the most typically classical form of poetry. This shows best the great part played by rationalism and naturalism in classical art and demonstrates that these two principles are quite compatible with one another.

In the visual art of the classical era the two elements of naturalism and stylization are even more intimately linked than in drama. In the latter, tragedy with its tendency to formal rigorism is a separate form from the naturalistic mime, and the naturalism of tragedy amounts to no more than a demand for logical probability in the plot and psychological plausibility in the characters. But in the plastic and graphic art of the age, the ugly, the common and the trivial became important subjects. On the pediments of the temple of Zeus at Olympia, the chief monument of early classical art, we find, for example, an old man with a slack, pendulous paunch, and a Lapith with ugly negroid features. The choice of subjects is, therefore, by no means exclusively determined by the ideal of *kalokagathia*. Contemporary vase painting makes a practice of using perspective and foreshortening and now finally discards the last remnants of archaic rectangularity and frontality. Already Myron's attention is concentrated on portraying liveliness and spontaneity; his whole aim is to represent movement, sudden effort, and posture charged with energy. He tries to fix the transient in movement, the impression made by a fleeting instant; in his 'Discobolus', he chooses to represent the most rapid, tense and concentrated instant of the action—the moment directly before the release of the discus. Here, for the first time since the Palaeolithic paintings, the value of the 'pregnant moment' is fully realized; here the history of European

illusionism begins and that of the archaic 'informative' and conceptual arrangement, according to the 'fundamental aspects' of the subject, ends. In other words, the stage is reached at which no formal beauty, however well composed, however decoratively effective, is thought to justify a breach of the laws of sense experience. The conquests of naturalism are no longer incorporated into a system of unchangeable traditions and accepted only within these limits; the representation has, at all costs, to be correct, and if correctness of representation is incompatible with tradition, it is the tradition that has to give way.

The manner of life now prevailing in the Greek democracies has become dynamic, untrammelled, free of all rigid traditions and prejudice to a degree quite unparalleled since Palaeolithic times. All external and institutional limitations upon individual freedom have been abolished. There are no despots or princes, hereditary priesthood or autonomous church, sacred books or revered dogmas, overt economic monopolies or bounds set to freedom of competition. Everything favours the rise of a worldly art, steeped in the joy of life and the actual, with a keen feeling for the value of the fleeting instant; but alongside of this dynamic and progressive trend, the older forces of conservatism are still alive. The nobility, clinging to its privileges and anxious to maintain the authoritarian clan state with the old monopolistic economy, endeavours also to prolong the life of the severe, static forms of the archaic style. Thus the whole history of classical art is determined by the alternations of these two opposed styles, as one or other of them temporarily gets the upper hand. After the dynamic beginning of the century, a static period supervenes with the working out of Polyclethus' famous formula; the Parthenon sculptures present a synthesis of the two tendencies, which towards the end of the century gives way to an extension of naturalism. But to draw an absolutely sharp distinction between the two styles, even at the extremes of the process, would be an illegitimate simplification of the historical reality—such is its complexity and diversity. The fact is that in Greek classical art, naturalism and stylization are inseparably linked in almost every work, though not always in such perfect balance as, for instance, in the Parthenon 'Banquet of the Gods', or—to mention a less

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ambitious work—in the 'Mourning Athena' of the Acropolis Museum. Outside classical art one could hardly find a work to compare with her for complete relaxation combined with complete control, for complete elimination of any trace of effort, strain or excess, for the sense of freedom and lightness, poise and serenity. It would, however, be quite wrong to conclude that the social conditions of contemporary Athens were necessary or even ideal for the production of art of this type or rank. For the creation of high artistic value, no simple sociological recipe can be given; the most sociology can do is to trace some elements in the work of art back to their origin, and these elements may well be the same in works of very different quality.

4. THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT IN GREECE

As the fifth century draws to a close, the naturalistic, individualistic and emotional elements in its art grow in extent and importance. There is a change of emphasis from the typical to the particular, from concentration to differentiation, from restraint to exuberance. In literature the epoch of biography begins, in visual art the era of portraiture. The style of tragedy approaches that of everyday conversation and takes on the impressionistic colouring of lyric poetry. The characters begin to seem more interesting than the plot; the complex and eccentric characters more attractive than those which are simple and natural. In visual art volume and perspective are emphasized and there is a preference for three-quarter views, foreshortenings and intersections. The tombstones portray family scenes that are intimate and full of feeling, while vase painting chooses for its subjects the idyllic, the delicate and the graceful.

The corresponding change in philosophy is the Sophistic movement, a spiritual revolution that in the second half of the fifth century puts the whole world outlook of the Greeks, which still rested on the assumptions of aristocratic culture, upon a completely new basis. This movement, rooted in the same urban conditions of life which gave rise to naturalism in art, now sets up

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a new ideal of education totally opposed to the aristocratic ideal of *kalokagathia*; it lays down a scheme of training which, instead of cultivating the qualities of the body, aims to produce rational, competent and eloquent citizens. The new bourgeois virtues that now displace the noble ideals of the chivalrous contest are founded upon knowledge, logical thinking, trained intellect and facility of speech. For the first time in the history of mankind the aim of education is the production of intellectuals. One need only go back to Pindar and his chaffing of the 'learned' to realize what a gulf separates the world of the Sophists from that of the Spartan teachers of physical training. In the world of the Sophists we meet for the first time with the conception of an *intelligentsia* that does not form a closed profession or caste, such as were the priests of the prehistoric or early historic times, or the rhapsodes of the Homeric age, but is conceived as a reservoir always having sufficient capacity to supply suitable candidates for political leadership.

The Sophists start by postulating that there are no limits to what education can accomplish and they maintain, in contrast to the old mystical belief in breeding, that 'virtue' can be taught. Western culture, which is based on self-consciousness, self-observation and self-criticism, has its origin in their idea of education.³⁵ They initiated the history of Western rationalism, with its criticism of dogmas, myths, traditions and conventions. They are the discoverers of historical relativity—the recognition that scientific truths, ethical standards and religious creeds are all historically conditioned. They are the first to realize that all norms and standards, whether in science, law, morality, mythology or art, are creations of human minds and hands. They discover the relativity of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil. They recognize the pragmatic motives underlying human valuations, and thus pave the way for all subsequent endeavour in the field of humanistic enlightenment. It is to be noted that their rationalism and relativism are connected with *the same trend of economy and the same general impulse towards free competition and money-making as gave rise to the Renaissance emancipation of science, the enlightenment of the eighteenth century and the materialism of the nineteenth.* Their

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experience of ancient capitalism aroused the same reactions in them as the experience of modern capitalism does in their successors.

Not merely is the art of the second half of the fifth century influenced by the same experience which formed the ideas of the Sophists; a spiritual movement such as theirs, with its stimulating humanism, was bound to have a direct effect upon the outlook of the poets and artists. When we come to the fourth century there is no branch of art in which their influence cannot be traced. Nowhere is the new spirit more striking than in the new type of athlete which, with Praxiteles and Lysippus, now supplants the manly ideal of Polycletus. Their Hermes and Apoxyomenos have nothing of the heroic, of aristocratic austerity and disdain about them; they give the impression of being dancers rather than athletes. Their intellectuality is expressed not merely in their heads; their whole appearance emphasizes that ephemeral quality of all that is human which the Sophists had pointed out and stressed. Their whole being is dynamically charged and full of latent force and movement. When you try to look at them they will not allow you to rest in any one position, for the sculptor has discarded all thought of principal view-points; on the contrary, these works underline the incompleteness and momentariness of each ephemeral aspect to such a degree as to force the spectator to be altering his position constantly until he has been round the whole figure. He is thus made aware of the relativity of each single aspect, just as the Sophists became aware that every truth, every norm and every standard has a perspective element and alters as the view-point alters. Art now frees itself from the last fetters of the geometrical; the very last traces of frontality now disappear. The Apoxyomenos is completely absorbed in himself, leads his own life and takes no notice of the spectator. The individualism and relativism of the Sophists, the illusionism and subjectivity of contemporary art, alike express the spirit of economic liberalism and democracy—the spiritual condition of people who reject the old aristocratic attitude towards life, with all its gravity and magnificence, because they think they owe everything to themselves and nothing to their ancestors, and who give vent to all their emotions and passions with com-

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plete lack of restraint because so whole-heartedly convinced that man is the measure of all things.

The Sophistic system of ideas finds its most comprehensive and significant expression in Euripides, the only real poet of the age of enlightenment. The mythological subjects are for him a mere peg on which to hang discussions of the philosophical questions of the day and of the commonest problems of middle-class life. He discusses the relations of the sexes, marriage, the status of women and slaves, and turns the saga of Medea into something like a domestic drama of married life.³⁶ His heroine, in her revolt against man, is almost nearer to the female characters of Hebbel and Ibsen than to the heroines of the older tragedy. What would these have thought of a woman who roundly declares that the bearing of children requires more courage than the heroic deeds of war! But the imminent dissolution of tragedy is evident, not only in Euripides' unheroic world-view, but also in his sceptical interpretation of fate—the very reverse of a theodicy. Aeschylus and Sophocles still believed in 'the justice immanent in the course of the world', but for Euripides man is a mere plaything of chance.³⁷ Instead of feeling awed at the fulfilment of the divine will, the spectator is astounded at the extraordinary freaks of man's destiny and horrified at the abrupt changes of worldly fortune to which he is liable. From this outlook, which corresponds to the relativity in the Sophistic teachings, derives that pleasure in the accidental and the extraordinary which is so characteristic of Euripides and of his successors. This joy in sudden changes of fortune also explains their preference for a happy ending in tragedy. The happy endings of Aeschylus are a relic of the primitive passion play in which the martyr-death of a god is followed by his resurrection,³⁸ and as such are the expression of a profound religious optimism. With Euripides, on the contrary, the effect of the happy ending is by no means edifying, for this is the product of the same blind chance which plunged the hero into misfortune. With Aeschylus the note of reconciliation at the end of the play leaves the tragic quality of the events unimpaired, with Euripides it is to a certain extent weakened and dispelled. The psychological naturalism which prevails in the dramas of Euripides completes the destruction of the tragi-heroic

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attitude to life. The mere fact that the question of blame and blamelessness of the different characters is repeatedly discussed hinders any experience of tragic awe. The heroes of Aeschylus are guilty in the sense that they are under a curse³⁹—which is something objective and indisputable; the idea of innocent suffering and of the injustice of fate does not occur with him at all. Only in Euripides does this subjective question come to be discussed with all sorts of accusations and justifications and pettefogging debates about degrees of blame and imputability. The characters of the tragedy now take on that pathological quality which enables the spectator to consider them as guilty and not guilty at the same time. This pathological quality fulfils the requirement of satisfying the taste of that age for the extraordinary and of providing a psychological justification for the hero. In its discussion of the question of blame and the motives of the tragic action, the Euripidean drama reveals another feature of the Sophistic frame of mind—its love of the rhetorical. And this, taken together with the typical Euripidean love of philosophical epigrams, betrays a lowering of aesthetic standards, or perhaps rather an over-hasty adoption of artistically undigested material.

Euripides' personality as a poet, too, is, when compared with that of his predecessors, a thoroughly modern phenomenon—the social type that owes its existence to the Sophists. He is a man of letters and a philosopher, a democrat and a friend of the people, a politician and a reformer; at the same time, he belongs to no class and is a social *déraciné* like his teachers. It is true that even in the time of the Tyrants we meet with poets like Simonides who ply their trade for a living, who sell their poems to any purchaser who offers, who lead a wandering life without any established position, and are treated by their patrons alternately as guests and servants. Such men are professional literati, but are far from constituting any independent profession of letters. Not merely was there no method of publication at all equivalent to printing; there was as yet no general demand for literary output sufficient to create a free market for this. The number of those interested in literature was so small that economic independence of the poets was out of the question. The Sophists are essentially in the direct line of succession from the poets of the Tyrants' age;

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they, too, are always on their travels and lead an irregular and insecure life; they are, however, by no means parasites and are dependent not on a strictly limited number of patrons, but rather on a relatively large group of customers which is impersonal and of various shades and complexions. They are thus not merely declassed; they do not attach themselves to any particular class—in fact they form a social group the like of which had not been seen before. Their outlook is democratic; their sympathies are with the disinherited and oppressed, but they earn their living as teachers of well-bred and well-to-do youths, since the poor can neither pay for nor make any use of their teachings. Thus they are the first representatives of that ‘detached intelligentsia’⁴⁰ which is socially homeless; it will not quite fit into any particular class and is the exclusive possession of none. Euripides’ outlook stamps him as belonging to this free and restless intelligentsia which flutters uncertainly between the classes.

Aeschylus imagined that his aristocratic ideal of personality was compatible with democracy, which, however, he deserted at a critical phase in its evolution. Sophocles unhesitatingly chooses the ideals of the nobility in preference to those of the democratic state. In the struggle between the special ties of kinship and the unlimited equalitarian forces of the state, he uncompromisingly supports the ideals of kinship. Aeschylus, in the *Oresteia*, portrays a terrifying example of individual self-help.⁴¹ Sophocles, in his *Antigone*, embraces the cause of the heroine against the democratic state, and in *Philoctetes* expresses unconcerned distaste for the unscrupulous bourgeois cunning and heartless efficiency of Odysseus.⁴² Now Euripides is a convinced democrat, but this means in practice that he attacks the old aristocracy rather than that he positively champions the new bourgeois state. His independent spirit shows itself in a sceptical attitude to the state as such.⁴³

The modernity of this type of poet, of which Euripides is the first example, appears from two characteristic features of his life—his lack of real success and his genius-like aloofness from the world. In the course of fifty years, and with an output of which we have the full text of nineteen and fragments of fifty-five out of a total of ninety-two plays, Euripides won only four prizes; he

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was, therefore, by no means a successful playwright—certainly not the first or only poet who was unsuccessful, but, at any rate, the first of whom we have record. The explanation is not that there were so many true connoisseurs before his day, but that there were so few poets; mere good craftsmanship in handling the poetic technique was enough to ensure them success. By the time of Euripides the position was different; the output, at least of plays, was if anything excessive and the audiences by no means consisted of connoisseurs; the supposed infallible taste of the Greek audience is another idealizing fantasy of the romantics, just like its supposed democratic character and its equation with the whole population of the Polis. The princes of Sicily and Macedonia, to whom Euripides and even the more successful Aeschylus fled from their ‘appreciative’ Athenians, proved to be a better audience than they. The other strikingly modern feature of the type of poet which Euripides now introduced into the history of literature is his apparently voluntary refusal to take any part whatever in public life. Euripides was not a soldier as Aeschylus was, nor a priestly dignitary as Sophocles was, but, on the other hand, he is the very first poet who is reported to have possessed a library, and he appears to be also the first poet to lead the life of a scholar in complete retirement from the world. If the bust of him, with its tousled hair, its tired eyes and the embittered lines round the mouth, is a true portrait, and if we are right in seeing in it a discrepancy between body and spirit, and the expression of a restless and dissatisfied life, then we may say that Euripides was the first unhappy poet, the first whose poetry brought him suffering. The notion of genius in the modern sense is not merely completely strange to the ancient world; its poets and artists have nothing of the genius about them. The rational and craftsmanlike elements in art are far more important for them than the irrational and intuitive. Plato’s doctrine of enthusiasm emphasized, indeed, that poets owed their work to divine inspiration and not to mere technical ability, but this idea by no means leads to the exaltation of the poet; it only increases the gulf between him and his work, and makes of him a mere instrument of the divine purpose.⁴⁴ It is, however, of the essence of the modern notion of genius that there is no gulf between the

artist and his work, or, if such a gulf is admitted, that the genius is far greater than any of his works and can never be adequately expressed in them. So genius connotes for us a tragic loneliness and inability to make itself fully understood. But the ancient world knows nothing of this or of the other tragic feature of the modern artist—his lack of recognition by his own contemporaries and his despairing appeals to a remote posterity. There is not a trace of all this—at least before Euripides.⁴⁵

Euripides' lack of success was mainly due to the fact that there was nothing in classical times that could be called an educated middle class. The old aristocracy took no pleasure in his plays, owing to their different outlook on life, and the new bourgeois public could not enjoy them either, owing to its lack of education. With his philosophical radicalism, Euripides is a unique phenomenon, even among the poets of his age, for these are in general as conservative in their outlook as were those of the classical age—in spite of a naturalism of style which was derived from the urban and commercial society they lived in, and which had reached a point at which it was really incompatible with political conservatism. As politicians and partisans these poets hold to their conservative doctrines, but as artists they are swept along in the progressive stream of their times. This inner contradiction in their work is a completely new phenomenon in the social history of art.

The remarkably complex spiritual conditions of the fourth century find their full expression in Plato—in the progressive nature of his art and the conservative character of his philosophy, in the naturalism of his dialogue, borrowed as it is from the plebeian mime, and in the idealism of his teachings, which are rooted in the aristocratic conception of life. In all Greek literature there is hardly another who champions so whole-heartedly the cultural ideals of the nobility. *Kalokagathia* is not more enthusiastically praised by Pindar or *sophrosýne* by Sophocles. The spiritual élite whom he would entrust with control of the state belongs to the old privileged upper class; the common people, in his view, have not the least claim to take part in its control. His theory of Ideas is the classical philosophic expression of conservatism, the pattern of all subsequent reactionary idealism. Any

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idealism that separates the world of timeless Forms, of pure norms and absolute values from the world of experience and practice signifies something of a retreat from life into pure contemplation and as such involves giving up the attempt to alter reality.⁴⁸ Such an attitude always works out ultimately in favour of dominating minorities, who rightly see in realism an approach to reality that might be dangerous to them, whereas a dominant majority has nothing to fear from realism. Plato's theory of Ideas fulfils the same social function for Athens of the fourth century as 'German Idealism' did for the nineteenth century; it furnishes the privileged minority with arguments against realism and relativism. Plato's political conservatism largely accounts for his archaizing theory of art (*Soph.* 234B)—his rejection of the new illusionist tendencies, his preference for the classical style of the Periclean age, and his admiration for the highly formalized art of the Egyptians which seemed to be governed by immutable laws (*Laws*, II, 656DE). He is opposed to everything new in art, as to innovation in general, scenting in novelty symptoms of disorder and decadence.⁴⁹ Plato bars poets from his Utopia, because they are engrossed in empirical reality, in sensible phenomena which are for him but illusions and half-truths, and also because they coarsen and distort the pure spiritual and normative Forms by attempting to express them in terms of sense. This first example of 'iconoclasm' in history—hostility to art is something completely unknown before Plato—these first doubts as to the possible bad effects that art might have, occur along with the first signs of an aesthetizing outlook on life in which art not merely has its place, but grows at the expense of all the other forms of culture and threatens to stifle them. Both phenomena are intimately connected. Art is not feared as long as it is a natural means of propaganda for various purposes or a form of expression restricted to one particular field of its own, but when, with the progress of aesthetic culture, joy in forms has come to imply complete indifference to their content, man begins to recognize in art a secret poison and an enemy in the camp. The fourth century was a time of war and disasters, of war and post-war profiteers, of commercial prosperity, of the rise of a new wealthy class which to some extent invested its profit in works of art and came to regard

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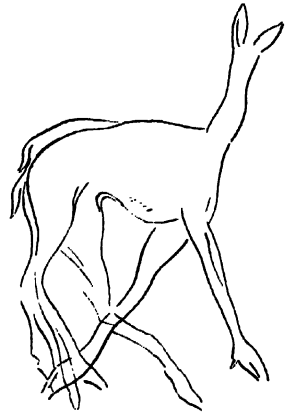
possession of them as a matter of prestige. Thus, there arose a tendency to over-value art, and to judge all life and all its problems by aesthetic standards. Plato's rejection of art is really a rejection of this prevalent aestheticism. The theoretical recognition that art is necessarily dependent upon our senses would not by itself have led him to take up such a hostile attitude towards it.

The diffusion of aesthetic culture among new social classes led to a replacement of the old artistic ideals, which had been rooted in the traditional education of an unquestionably dominant class, by new ideals more closely related to the new standards of life. Wilamowitz-Moellendorff connects Aristotle's theory of tragedy as a purge by pity and terror with this change in the social make-up of the audience in the theatre. He interprets it as a sign that the emotional element was now getting the upper hand in drama, and the 'philistine' attitude to the theatre as if it were a device to enable people to 'escape from the wretchedness of their daily life for a few hours' and have a good cry.⁴⁷ The search for new material, the popularity of new types of subjects so characteristic of the art of the fourth century, is linked with two principal features of the new age—its extreme emotionalism, shown in a universal desire for intense stimulations of which the emotional philistinism of the new theatre is only one symptom, and its abolition of taboos, which had hitherto forbidden the representation of certain of the subjects that now became popular. The first category of new subjects of art includes portraiture and biography; the second, representations of the female nude. Another outcome of changed taste due to social displacements is the ever-increasing popularity in art of the younger and more impulsive Olympians, especially Aphrodite and Artemis, at the expense of the older and more dignified Hera and Athena.⁴⁸ Finally, the rise of a new capitalistic class of rentiers explains one of the most remarkable trends of the century—the emancipation of sculpture from architecture. Up to the end of the fifth century by far the greater part of the sculptor's production is for the architect; even when it is not definitely part of the building, a statue has to fit in with an architectural framework. Now, in proportion as private orders replace state patronage, works of statuary are of smaller size, more intimate in character and of a more readily movable type. Fourth-

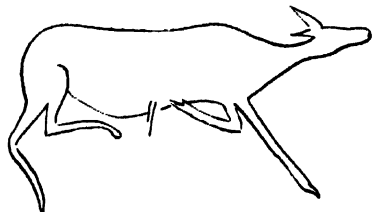


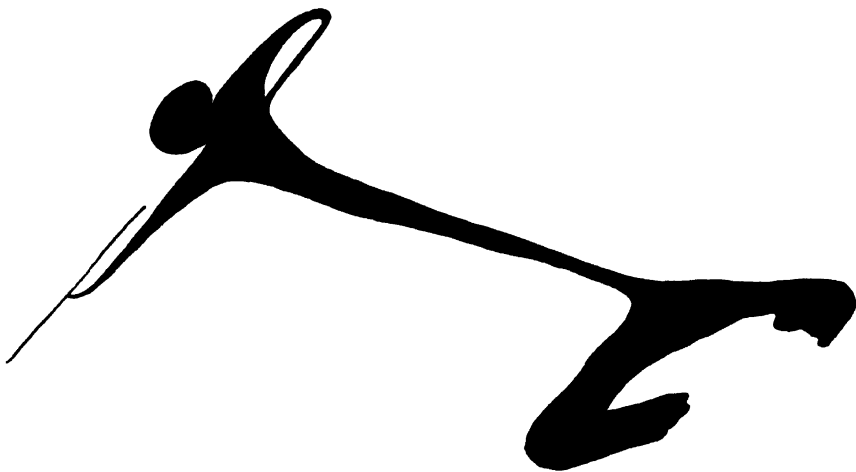
1. BISON. Sketch by Fauconnet after a cave painting in Altamira. Example of the naturalism of the Palaeolithic hunters who make art, as an instrument of magic, subservient to the needs of everyday life.

2. HIND. Drawing by Henri Breuil after an engraving on limestone found in Bout-du-Mont near Les Eyzies in France. Example of the impressionism of movement into which the naturalism of the North Spanish and South French cave paintings develops.

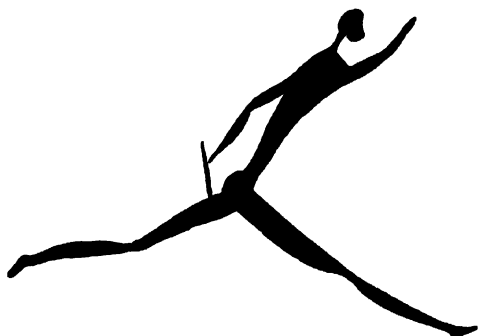


3. FAWN. Drawing by O. Moszeik after a bushman painting. The anthropological parallel to the naturalism of the Old Stone Age. This, too, is an example of the art of hunters who believe in magic.

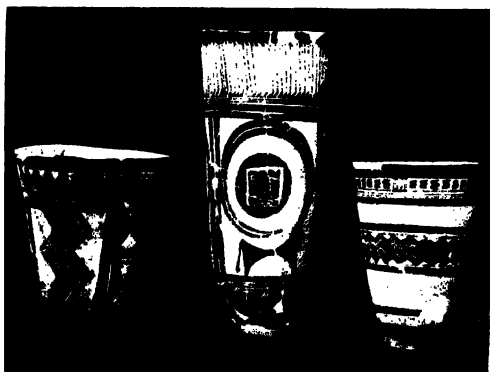




1. HUNTER. *From a Mesolithic painting in the so called East Spanish style which transforms the naturalism of the Franco-Calabrian trend into a stylizing expressionism.*



2. HUNTER. *Rock painting from the Orange Free State after a copy by G. H. Stow. The anthropological parallel to the expressionism of the later Palaeolithic age.*



3. PAINTED EARTHEN VESSELS. *Paris, Louvre. About 4000 B.C. From the necropolis of Susa. - Example of early Mesopotamian art on the level of Neolithic geometrisism.*



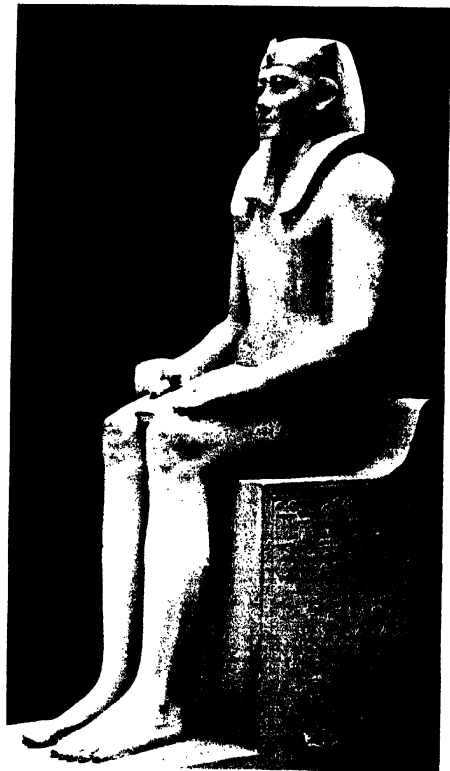
1. "THE VILLAGE MAYOR" - Detail. - Cairo, Museum. Early 14th dynasty. - The classical example of the naturalism of the Old Kingdom.



2. PRINCE REHOTEP - Detail. - Cairo, Museum. 14th dynasty. - From the burial place of King Sutekh-neb-ankh may have been related to the Prince. Even the memorial of a person so closely connected with the court shows a directness in the representation which is unthinkable in similar works later on.



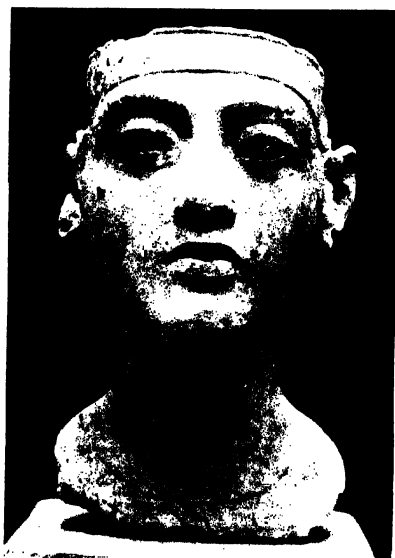
3. SCRIBE. - Paris, Louvre. 14th dynasty. - Here, too, naturalism is the predominant element, but formal principles are already more obtrusive and make a perfect balance with the naturalistic factors.



1. SENUSERT I. Cairo, Museum, XIIIth dynasty. — A work typical of the official conception of art of the Middle Kingdom and consisting of nothing but purely stereotyped features.

2. AMENHOTEP IV. Berlin, Altes Museum, XIVth dynasty. — The portraits of the great reformer are the best examples of the new "impressionistic" style which breaks up the lifeless rigidity, if not the whole conventionality, of the old courtly-religious art.

3. PLASTER MASK. Berlin, Altes Museum. — Life of Amenhotep IV. From the workshop of the sculptor Thutmose in El-Amarna. The work possibly represents a slightly touched-up death mask.

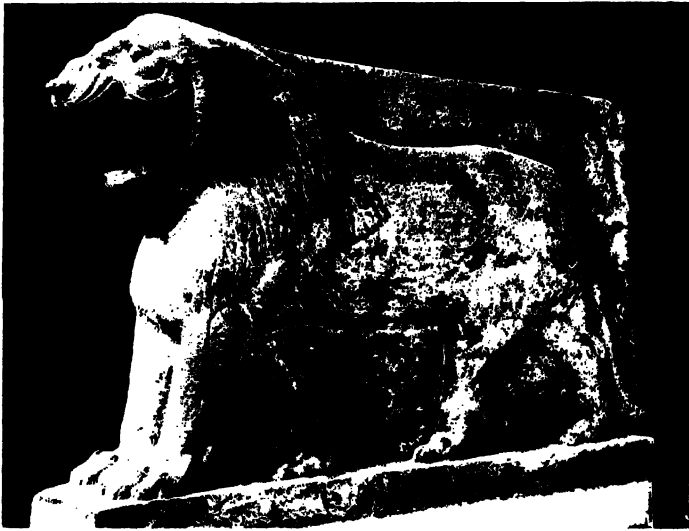




1. PRINCESS KAWIT WITH TWO SERVANTS, *Cairo, Museum, Middle Kingdom.*

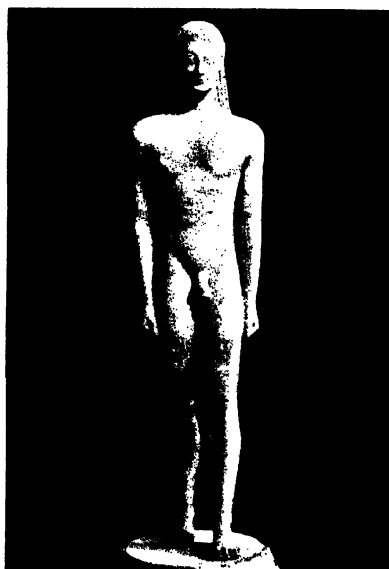
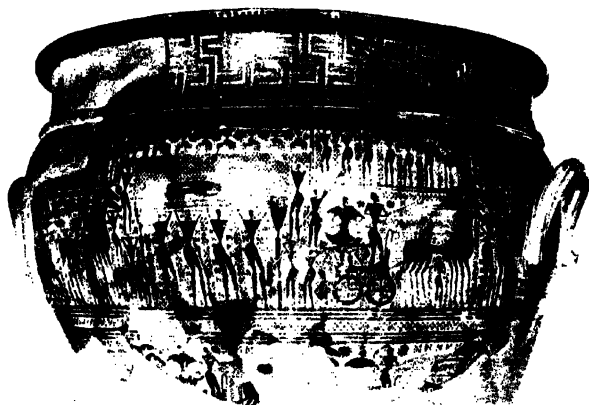
The representation combines the frontal and the non-frontal conception. The mistress is depicted in the conventional court style, whereas one of the maidservants is shown from the side with frontal symmetry partly abandoned.

2. DRAUGHT OF FISH, *Berlin, Altes Museum, About 2800 B.C.* -- *The work shows the complete abandonment of frontality typical of the representation of scenes of work.*



1. LION. London, British Museum. 9th century B.C. Example of the so called 'Doorkeepers' well known from Assyrian architectural sculpture which, with their two stationary legs from the front-view and four moving legs from the side view, give the most intense expression to the anti-naturalistic principle of frontality.

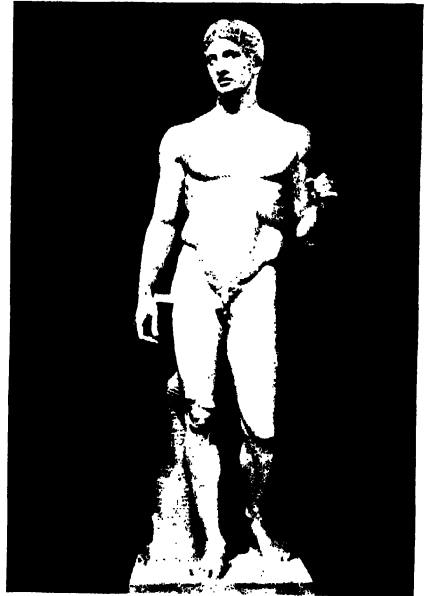
2. WOUNDED LIONESSE. London, British Museum. 7th century B.C.—Alabaster relief from the palace of Ashur-bani-pal in Nineveh. The battle and hunting reliefs of the palace represent the animals with a thrilling naturalness, in contrast to the human figures.



1. DIPYLON VASE. *Paris, Louvre. About 800 B.C.* The abstract geometric forms of the decoration are in many respects more closely connected with Neolithic art than with the artistic creations of the Ancient-Oriental urban cultures.

2. FEMALE FIGURE. *Athens, Acropolis Museum, 6th century B.C.* One of the numerous "korai", offered as votive gifts, with the typical features of the elegant Ionian style.

3. MALE FIGURE. *Athens, National Museum, 6th century B.C.* One of the earliest artistic representations of the idea of *kalokagathia* propagated by the Greek ruling class through its artists, poets and philosophers.



1. OLD MAN from the East Pediment of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia. About 460 B.C. - Example of the naturalistic conception of art of early classicism which also includes the ugly and trivial as subjects for artistic treatment.

2. MYRON: DISCUS THROWER. Rome, Vatican. Middle of the 5th century B.C. Roman marble copy. - The work, which attempts to capture the momentaneous impression of a fleeting movement, is the classical expression of the dynamic attitude to life of the age.

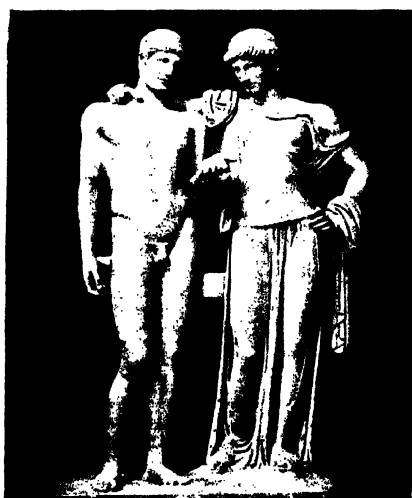
3. POLYKLETUS: SPEAR-HOLDER. Naples, Museum. 450-440 B.C. Roman marble copy. - The Polykletan 'canon' represents, with its equilibrium, the classical version of the aristocratic ideal of beauty.



1. SYMPOSIUM OF THE GODS *from the East Frieze of the Parthenon, London British Museum, 447-432 B.C.* The sculptures of the Parthenon are the most representative artistic monument of Athenian democracy.

2. 'MOURNING ATHENA', Athens, Epropolis Museum, Middle of the 5th century. A less pretentious but just as perfect creation of Greek classicism, as the Parthenon sculptures themselves.

3. LYSIPPOS: APOXYOMENOS, Rome, Vatican, Late 4th century, Roman marble copy. The new, post classical, less severe version of kalokagathia. The aristocratic masculine ideal has lost most of its heroic features.



1. SENECA, Naples, Muscum, 2nd century B.C., Roman bronze copy, Hellenistic naturalism.

2. TRITON, Rome, Vatican, Roman marble copy, Hellenistic baroque.

3. SEATED GIRL, Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Roman marble copy, Hellenistic rococo.

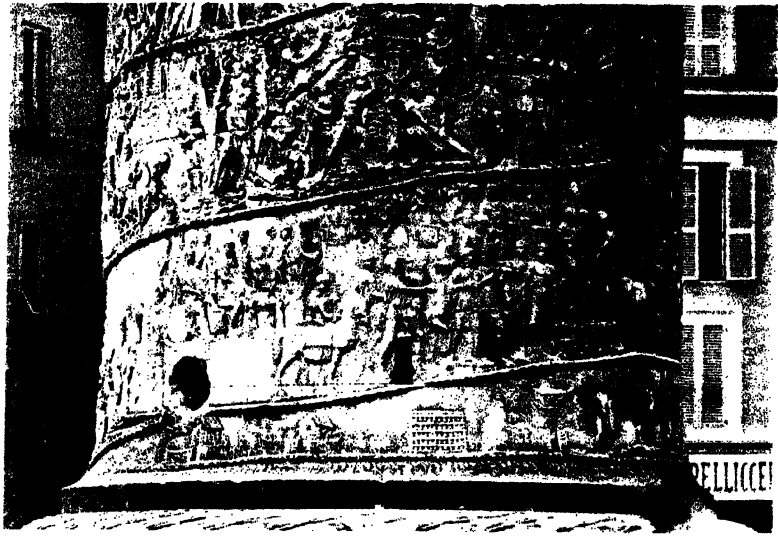
4. ORESTES AND ELECTRA, Naples, Museo Nazionale, Hellenistic archaism.



1. ROMAN MARRIED COUPLE ('Cato and Porcia'), Rome, Vatican. Augustan age.—
The work still bears traces of the old sacred portrait sculpture connected with ancestral worship.

2. PUTTO, Wall painting in the House of the Vettii in Pompeii, 4th Pompeian style.
Between 79 and 63 B.C. Roman impressionism.

3. PORTRAIT HEAD, London, British Museum. About A.D. 250. Roman expressionism.



1. COLUMN OF TRAJAN (Lower part). Rome. I.D. 113 'Continuous' representation of the Dacian campaign.

2. DUCCHIO: THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN. Siena. Opera del Duomo. Part of the 'Majestas' for the Cathedral of Siena completed in 1311. Example of the 'continuous' representation in the Middle Ages. Christ appears in the same scene twice, representing two different phases of the action.

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century Athens did not build a single new temple, so that the sculptors there got no more big commissions from architecture; the great buildings of the age are in the East, which is consequently the scene of new developments in monumental sculpture.

5. THE HELLENISTIC AGE

In the Hellenistic age, that is, in the three centuries following Alexander the Great, the centre of gravity of artistic development is markedly shifted from Greece eastwards, but reciprocal influences are at work all the time and for the first time in the history of mankind we really have to do with a culture which is an international hybrid. It is this levelling of national cultures which gives Hellenistic art its strikingly modern character. Everywhere there is a compromise between various streams, not merely in the field of national cultures, a blurring of sharp divisions, not merely between Occidental and Oriental, Greek and the barbarian, but also between different social levels, though not perhaps between classes. In spite of the growing differences of income, the ever-increasing concentration of capital and the steady increase of the proletariat,⁴⁹ in a word, in spite of the growing opposition between classes, there is everywhere a certain social levelling that, at last, puts a definite end to the privileges of birth. This is the last stage of the trend towards the abolition of social distinctions which had been going on since the days of hereditary monarchy and authoritarian priesthood. The decisive step was due to the Sophists, who invented the completely new rationalistic conception of *areté*, independent of birth and breeding, to which every Greek without exception could attain. The next step in this levelling is taken by the Stoics, who first enunciated standards of human value that are free from all tinge of race and nationality. The Stoics' freedom from national prejudice merely expressed a state of affairs already achieved in the kingdoms of Alexander's successors, just as the liberalism of the Sophists is merely a reflection of the social conditions due to the rise of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie of the cities.

The very fact that every inhabitant of these kingdoms could

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become a citizen of any city he fancied, by merely changing his residence, signified an end of the ideals of the Polis. The citizen is now simply a member of an economic society and stands to gain by complete freedom of movement rather than by belonging to a certain traditional group. Community of interest is no longer founded upon identity of race or nationality, but on identity of the economic position of the individual. The era of cosmopolitan capitalism now opens. The state favours selection according to business ability, since it finds that the victors in the commercial struggle for life are also the most useful for the consolidation of the world state, whereas the old aristocracy, owing to its exclusiveness, to the value it sets on racial purity and preservation of its cultural heritage, is quite unsuited for the organization and administration of a state of this kind. The new state leaves the aristocracy to its fate and hastens the formation of a bourgeois upper class, without prejudice of race or caste, relying simply upon its economic power. With its economic mobility, its freedom from meaningless traditions, its rationalistic power of improvising, this class is very similar to, though not identical with the old middle class, and provides a natural cement for the economic and political consolidation of the various peoples of the world state.

This rationalism which the state now prizes above all shows itself in all fields of cultural life; not merely in the levelling of races and classes or in the abolition of all old traditions which might hinder free competition, but also in a super-national organization of scientific and artistic production, a *commercium litterarum et artium*, that unites the literary men and scholars of the whole civilized world in co-operative production upon a large scale—thus, through central research institutions, museums and libraries, exploiting to the full the principle of division of labour in the intellectual field. The rationalistic outlook everywhere leads to the replacement of traditional groups by co-operative undertakings adapted to the particular task in hand. Just as the Hellenistic state moves its officials about regardless of their origins and traditions,⁵⁰ just as capitalistic commerce emancipates its devotees from ties of birth-place and native land, so the artists and scholars are also uprooted and herded together in great international centres of culture.

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Even the Sophists of the fifth century, and before them the poets and artists of the age of Tyranny, had made themselves independent of the town in which they were born and bred, and followed a roving way of life. In their case, however, this meant that they had freed themselves from one set of ties, but had failed to replace them with any others. But in the Hellenistic era, the old loyalty to the Polis gave way to a new sense of solidarity with the whole educated world. In the field of scientific enquiry this brought about a co-operation between scholars on a scale hitherto undreamt of. The assignment of tasks and the integration of results, in short the rationalization of the methods of work with a view to maximum production, appears to have been in direct imitation of the principles of rationally conducted business. Julius Kaerst observes that the 'materialization' of spiritual life, which we regard as a characteristic of our own technical age, was already a feature of that time.⁵¹ Already he finds the personal factor set aside, tasks split up and apportioned among the collaborators regardless of personal capacity or inclination. He suggests that all this technique of organizing intellectual work by the mechanical combination of interdependent individual production was modelled upon the state administration of the time, the centralized bureaucracy and hierarchy of officials which had to be built up and maintained by these gigantic states.⁵²

Such specialization and depersonalization of enquiry led inevitably to a taste for mere erudition and a temptation to eclecticism. In the Hellenistic era, apparently for the first time in the history of Western culture, both of these are very much in evidence; these are probably the features in which that age most strikingly resembles our own. Eclecticism is also a keynote of Hellenistic production in art as well as in science. Hellenistic taste, formed by the historical approach to art, with the prevalent interest in antiquities and a deep understanding for the most diverse artistic ideals of the past, resulted in an indiscriminate acceptance of stimuli. This tendency was constantly strengthened by the founding of new collections and museums. There were already collections, both princely and private, but now works of art begin to be collected systematically and according to plan. The aim is now to present 'complete' collections that exhibit the

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whole development of Greek art. Where important works were missing, copies were made to fill the gaps. In their scientific planning, the collections of the Hellenistic age are the forerunners of our museums and galleries. Not that the artistic style of earlier ages was always uniform—a strictly formal art of the upper class and a less formal art of the lower class are often found together, religious art of a conservative character alongside secular art of a progressive character. But before Hellenistic times it would hardly have been possible for several different styles and fashions to emerge together in the same social milieu, and for works in the most various styles to be produced for the same social class or the same cultural stratum. The 'baroque', 'rococo' and classicistic styles of the Hellenistic age originate successively but continue to exist alongside one another, and from the very start, the powerful and the intimate, pomposity and genre, the colossal and the minute, the delicate and the graceful, all share the favour of the public. The autonomy of art discovered by the sixth century, and consistently practised by the fifth century, turned in the fourth century into aestheticism and now culminates in a highly skilful but irresponsible playing with forms and an experimenting with abstract means of expression—a license which, though still permitting some exquisite work to be done, plays havoc with the standards of classical art so that they become to a certain extent inapplicable. The connection between this dissolution of classical standards and the changes of structure of the social strata who buy works of art and determine public taste is plain to see. As these strata became progressively less uniform, the more diverse are the styles which spring up concurrently. The most important change is the emergence of the former middle class, hitherto almost without influence in this field, as a new and substantial clientèle for works of art. This class, naturally, looks on art with different eyes from those of the nobility, though often manifesting the greatest eagerness to acquire their taste. The second feature of the art market, and one of decisive importance for the future, is the existence of the kings and their courts. The demands they make upon the artist are quite different from those of the nobility or the bourgeoisie, though both nobility and bourgeoisie are ready enough to adopt their manners and ape their pompous

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and theatrical style upon a more modest scale. Thus the classical tradition in art becomes mingled with the genre and naturalism liked by the bourgeois and with the luxurious 'baroque' of the courtiers. Finally, the new capitalistic organization of art production also contributed to an eclectic enrichment of styles, as it strove to profit from the aestheticism of the times, to create a demand for works of art and to stimulate periodic changes of fashion. Besides the pottery workshops, already to some extent run upon factory lines, there was the copying of masterpieces, which now begins upon a huge scale. This was no doubt carried on in the same localities and by the same persons as the production of originals; and artists who have to spend much of their time in copying are all too readily tempted to indulge in mere play with various styles and forms. The eclecticism of this age is accompanied by a mingling of different arts and art forms—another characteristic phenomenon of the late period, but one whose beginnings go back to the fourth century. This aspect is evident in the pictorial style of sculpture in which Lysippus and Praxiteles work, but it can also be observed in other directions, particularly in the drama, which, since Euripides had become overloaded with lyrical and rhetorical elements. Such trespassing is a sign of that will to conquer new fields to which portraiture, landscape and still life owed their popularity—subjects which were formerly almost unknown. The choice of these subjects shows an attachment to material things which was natural in a commercial age accustomed to thinking in terms of goods. Man, hitherto almost the sole subject of art, is now everywhere dethroned in favour of subjects drawn from the world of things. In this way the 'materialization', which we have noted in the organization of intellectual work, now shows itself in the subject-matter—not only the vogue of still life and landscape, but also the naturalistic portrayal of a person as a piece of nature, being a symptom of this trend.

The great development of portraiture is matched in literature by the ever-growing popularity of biography and autobiography.⁵³ The value of the 'human document' grows as insight into a man's psychology becomes a more and more indispensable weapon in commercial competition. But the increased

interest in biography is due to other factors also—the growing tendency to philosophical self-reflection and the quickening of hero-worship since Alexander the Great, and even in some degree to the increased interest in personalities manifested by the new court society.⁵⁴ The new interest in psychology gives rise now to the novel and the bourgeois comedy. Their imaginary plots—principally love stories taking place in the world of the public for which they are written and no longer in the remote world of saga—are the creation of Hellenistic literature.⁵⁵ Such is the world of Menander's comedies, which contains roughly all that still lived of the Old Comedy and of Euripidean tragedy after the disappearance of city democracy and Dionysus worship. Its characters belonged to the middle and lower classes; its plots revolve around love, money, wills, miserly fathers, scatterbrained sons, grasping mistresses, deceitful parasites, artful servants, mistaken twins and parents lost and found again. The love interest is quite indispensable. Here too it is Euripides who paved the way for the Hellenistic age. Before him love was unknown as a subject of dramatic conflict; he discovered it, but only in the Hellenistic age did it become the linchpin of the plot.⁵⁶ The love motif of bourgeois comedy is perhaps the most bourgeois feature about it, since the lovers struggle, not against gods and demigods, but against the apparatus of bourgeois society—obstructive parents, rich rivals, betraying letters and cunningly contrived wills. Surely this whole apparatus of love intrigue reflects the 'disenchantment'⁵⁷ and rationalization of life which always goes with the triumph of money economy and the commercial spirit.

At last the bourgeois has a theatre of his own in which he really feels at home. In every little town there is a modest building, and in the big cities those new palaces of stone or marble whose remains still survive. It is this we are apt to think of when we speak of the Greek theatre; they were not, however, built for Aeschylus and Sophocles, but for the despised Euripides and his later competitors—these comprising not merely Menander and Herondas, but all sorts of acrobats, flautists, jugglers and parodists, as motley a crew as were the competitors of Shakespeare centuries later.

ROMAN EMPIRE

6. THE EMPIRE AND THE END OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

The age of Hellenistic art gradually gives way to the predominance of Roman art; after the beginning of the Empire it is the latter and not Greek art in which all the important developments take place. The turgid 'baroque' and the delicate 'rococo' of the Hellenistics reached a dead end and simply went on repeating worn-out formulas; but Rome of the Caesars, along with the uniform administration of the Empire, produced something of a more or less uniform 'Imperial art'⁵⁸ which, since it embodied all the most progressive tendencies, came in time to set the fashion everywhere. After the Augustan age, in which the style was still decidedly Hellenizing, though with a smack of bourgeois sobriety and dullness, the special Roman characteristics came increasingly to the fore during the reign of the Flavians and Trajan until, in the later Empire, they finally got the upper hand. From the very first, the taste for Greek art was confined to the well-born and cultured classes; the middle class had little interest in it, and the masses, of course, still less. During the last centuries of the Western Roman Empire, as the aristocracy came to lose its dominating position and left the towns, when generals and Caesars rose from the lowest ranks of the army and the farthest corners of the provinces, when the most important religious movement of the time was a movement starting with the dregs of the people and gradually invading the upper classes, art also took on an increasingly popular and provincial guise, and little by little discarded its classical ideals.^{58a} Artistic development, above all in the field of portrait sculpture, now linked up with the old Roman tradition that had lived on without a break in the masks of ancestors which stood in the halls.^{58b} To describe them simply as 'popular art' in the strictest sense would be going too far, for even though the patrician privilege of displaying portraits of their ancestors in funeral processions^{58c} had, in the last years of the Republic, been extended to the plebeian families,^{58d} the cult of the ancestral portraits remained essentially a feature of the aristocratic funerals and can hardly have extended to the broad mass of the people. However that may be, the decisive difference between

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the portraiture of the Romans and that of the Greeks is that the latter was almost exclusively designed for public monuments, whereas the former existed mainly to serve private needs. It is this circumstance, above all, which explains that informal and immediate naturalism of the Roman portrait which in the end prevailed even in works designed for public purposes. The development of Roman art did not, however, by any means run a uniform course. To the very end there are two different tendencies alongside of one another: the Hellenizing, idealistic, typicalizing, theatrically emotional style of the court aristocracy, on the one hand, and the native, sober, naturalistic style of the more mobile middle class, on the other. The triumph of the popular type of art over that of the élite did not take place at the same time or to the same extent in the various branches, and aristocratic art took refuge finally in an impressionistic style which must have been completely incomprehensible to the masses, before eventually surrendering to the plebeian simplicity and expressionist directness of late Roman art.

In the Augustan age, under the Greek influence which was then dominant, sculpture was the leading art; but thereafter painting comes more and more to the fore and in the end almost completely supplants sculpture. By the third century copying of Greek works of art had stopped and for the next two centuries it is painting that dominates the field of interior decoration.⁵⁹ Painting is the late Roman and early Christian art par excellence, and takes the place held by sculpture in the classical age; it is the popular art of the Romans, speaking to all in the language of all. Never before was there such a mass-production of pictures, never before was painting employed for such trivial and ephemeral purposes as in Rome.⁶⁰ Anyone appealing to the public, informing it upon important affairs, anxious to plead his cause with it, or win adherents for his interests, was well advised to use pictures for the purpose. The victorious general had posters carried around in his triumphal procession to display his warlike deeds, the conquered cities and the humiliation of the foe to the eyes of the admiring people. In the courts, prosecution and defence alike made use of pictures which gave judges and public crude but vivid illustrations of the points at issue, the circumstances of the

crime or the alibi of the accused. The faithful offered up votive pictures, depicting the danger they had gone through, and filled with a wealth of purely personal detail. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus offered to the goddess of freedom pictorial representations showing how his victorious soldiers had been entertained by the town of Beneventum. Trajan had the tale of his conquests, baker so-and-so, the life of his shop, laboriously carved in stone.⁶¹ In Rome the picture is news, editorial, advertisement, poster, chronicle, political cartoon, news-reel and film drama rolled into one. Their love of pictures reveals, besides pleasure in the anecdotal and interest in documentation and eye-witness accounts, a kind of primitive, childlike, insatiable desire for sights and illustrations. All these pictures are pages out of a picture-book for adults—sometimes, as in the case of the climbing spirals of Trajan's Column, an 'unrolling picture-book',⁶² intended to convey the continuity of the events and achieve the same kind of effects that we now expect of the film. The demand which these pictures aimed to meet was no doubt crude and essentially in-artistic. To want to experience everything yourself, to see everything with your own eyes, just as if you had been there, is rather naïve, and it is a primitive outlook which rejects as 'second-hand' anything that is depicted in the transposed form which, for a more sophisticated age, indeed constitutes the very essence of art.

It is, however, from this very 'waxwork' style or 'film' style, which no doubt originally appealed only to the uneducated with their pleasure in the actual, from this very desire to depict memorable events as vividly and as fully as possible, that the epic style emerged which is the style of Christian and Western art. The works of the ancient East and of Greece are plastic and monumental, almost without action, neither epic nor dramatic, while those of Roman and Western art are illustrative, illusionist, epic and dramatic and as full of event as a film. Ancient Eastern and Greek art consist almost solely of works of a ceremonial character, interpretations of timeless reality, single figures, whereas Roman and Western art consist mainly of history painting, the depiction of scenes in which essentially transient phenomena are caught and translated into spatial terms through skilful optical technique. Greek and Greco-Roman art solved this problem, where

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they could not circumvent it, by the method which Lessing called that of the 'pregnant moment'; this compressed the whole content of the action into one single situation which, though itself without movement, is pregnant with movement. Lessing supposed that this was the method of visual art as such, but in reality it is only the method of classical Greek art and of the modern art of the last centuries. In late Roman and medieval Christian art the utterly different method is employed which Franz Wickhoff calls the 'continuous' as opposed to the 'isolating'.⁶³ He means the style—arising from an epic, illustrative, cinematographic impulse in art—which portrays the various stages of an action in the same framework or landscape without a break, repeating the principal figures in each phase of the action, so that the different scenes have the same effect as the familiar sequences of drawings in humorous papers and suggest the continuity of a film. It is true, the movement is only simulated and the separate scenes are analogous to the single frames of the reel rather than to the continuous pictures on the screen, but the intention is the same. Late Roman art and the modern film both fulfil a public demand for completeness and directness, but above all a demand for pictures, just because they are more explicit, more impressive, and require less of the public than any possible description in words.

The other important trend in late Roman art is impressionism; this is lyrical rather than epic, and tries to fix a single, unique optical impression in all its subjective momentariness. Wickhoff considers this method to be preliminary to and the organic complement of the 'continuous' style,⁶⁴ but so direct a connection between the two styles cannot be established. They emerge at different times and in different circumstances, both spiritual and external; the impressionism of the first century A.D. is the ultimate refinement of classical art, while the continuous style emerges only in the second century and is the first rather crude and vulgar symptom of an artistic urge essentially alien to the classical taste. The two styles have their origin in different social strata, and hardly ever occur together in the same work. The continuous method emerges only after the best period of ancient impressionism is over. Some externals of the impression-

istic technique were preserved a while as part of the tradition of the painter's craft until they too were unlearned and forgotten. The continuous method and the epic style, aiming as they do to bring out the action of the subject, do not supplement but, on the contrary, swallow up and annihilate the impressionistic technique. The continuous method expressed an essentially anti-naturalistic impulse and there is, therefore, hardly a trace of it in the two great naturalistic periods—of Greek and post-medieval art. Wickhoff's assertion that the continuous style dominates the whole of Western art from the second to the sixteenth centuries is quite inexplicable; even in the later Gothic period it is by no means common, and after the beginning of the Renaissance it is exceptional. In any case, there is no inner connection between the illusionism of the continuous method and the optical illusionism of the impressionistic style.

But impressionism, though going its own distinct way, was a factor which hastened the dissolution of ancient art. In making the figures lighter and flatter, more and more airy and sketchy, it makes them in a certain sense less material. After they have become just figures for colouristic and atmospheric effects and have lost their bodily volume, their structural solidity and their physical consistency, one is apt to imagine that the painter was deliberately pursuing some spiritual or transcendent ideal.⁶⁵ Thus a naturalistic and materialistic impressionism paves the way for its stylistic opposite, spiritual expressionism.⁶⁶ One is here reminded of the expressionism of Palaeolithic painting, which also ushered in its complete opposite (from a stylistic point of view), the geometrical style of Neolithic art. Both cases equally show how equivocal the various styles are, how readily each can serve as a vehicle for quite different world-views. The impressionism of the fourth Pompeian style, with its virtuosity of subtle suggestion, is the refined product of the urban intelligentsia of Rome; the 'impressionism' of the Christian Catacombs, on the other hand, its figures equally without weight or volume, is just as typical of the world-denying Christian who renounces everything that is earthly and material.

The art of representing the human figure in the ancient world begins and ends with 'frontality'; we can follow the changes

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from the conventionality and geometrism of archaic art, through the free movement of classical art and the contortions of Hellenistic baroque back to the symmetrical, flat, solemn front view of late Roman art.⁶⁷ The course of this development starts with the subordination of art to religious cult, goes on through the reign of autonomy and aestheticism, and ends in a new form of spiritual dependence; beginning as the expression of an authoritarian social order, it leads through the periods of democracy and liberalism to become again the expression of a new spiritual authority. Whether one counts this last phase of the development as the final stage of ancient art—accepting Droysen's notion that ancient civilization abolished itself and paganism through some inner impulsion of its own—or as the first stage of a new world epoch is more or less a question of the most convenient classification and periodization. But just as we have to recognize in the colonate an early form of feudalism,⁶⁸ so also we can admit no break between late Greco-Roman art and that of the Christian Middle Ages.

7. POETS AND ARTISTS IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

There is one thing that hardly alters, at least perceptibly, from the beginning to the end of the Greco-Roman epoch—and that is the point of view from which the plastic or graphic artist is judged and valued relatively to the poet. The latter at times enjoys a quite peculiar esteem as seer and prophet, bestower of fame and interpreter of myths; the plastic or graphic artist is and remains a banausic artisan who, with his wage, gets all that he is entitled to get. Various factors account for this distinction. First of all, the sculptor or painter works for reward and makes no attempt to hide the fact, whereas the poet is looked upon as the guest-friend of his patron, even at times when he is utterly dependent upon him. Then, too, the sculptor and the painter have to work with dirty materials and tools whereas the poet goes about with clean clothes and hands—all of which counted for more than one might think in the eyes of an untechnical age. But most important of all is the fact that the sculptor or painter is obliged to be doing manual work that involves bodily effort and

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the performance of many wearisome tasks, while the labours of the poet are certainly not obvious to the eye. This low estimation of people who have to work for their living, this contempt of all work done for gain, and even of productive work in general, originates in the fact that such activities—in contrast with the primeval aristocratic pursuits of government, war and sport—smack of subordination and service.⁶⁹ At a time when agriculture and stock-raising were fully developed and carried on mainly by women, war had become the principal occupation of men and hunting their chief form of sport. War and hunting both require practice, courage and skill, and therefore stand in high esteem; on the other hand, occupations involving minute, patient, exacting work are suitable for weaklings and so are without honour. This line of thought is pushed to extremes, and in time all productive activity, any occupation that earns a living, comes to be regarded as dishonourable. Such work is assigned to slaves because it is despised, not despised (as was formerly supposed) because done by slaves. The association of manual work with slaves is at most a factor that helped to maintain the primitive notions of prestige, but these notions are certainly much older than the institution of slavery.

The ancient world, impelled to bridge the contradiction between this contempt for manual work and its high estimation of art as a vehicle of religion and propaganda, finds the solution in a conceptual separation of the work of art from the personality of the artist; it reveres the creation while despising the creator.⁷⁰ Comparing this standpoint with the modern view which sets the artist above his work—abandoning the fiction that the artist's personality is completely expressed in his work—we can see the great difference between the ancient and the modern world in respect of their valuation of work as such. Even if, as Veblen asserts,⁷¹ the primitive prestige attached to unproductive activity has never been quite lost, yet the difference between that age and ours is still immense. At all events, this prejudice went far deeper in the ancient world than in our day. As long as the warlike nobility retained its predominance in the Greek world, a primitive, parasitic, freebooters' notion of honour persisted; and when the predominance of this class ceases, another very similar

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conception of prestige, derived from the athletic contests, became current. When arms were silent, such contests were considered to be the only worthy occupation for a man; this new ideal of living equally implies the idea of a struggle absorbing all the energies of the participants and requiring that they should possess independent means of existence.

For the Greek ruling class and its philosophers, fullness of leisure is the precondition of all that is good and beautiful—it is the priceless possession which alone makes life worth living. Only he who has leisure can achieve wisdom and freedom of spirit, can master life and enjoy it to the full. The inner connection between this ideal of living and the social position of the rentier class is obvious. Its *kalokagathia*, its all-round training of the bodily and spiritual powers, its contempt for all narrowing specialization and one-sided expertise, proclaim an essentially unprofessional ideal. When Plato, in the *Laws*, stresses the contrast between an education which enhances the whole personality and a mere training in professional skill, he expresses not only his love for the old aristocratic *kalokagathia*, but also his obvious distaste for the new democratic bourgeoisie, which has brought about occupational differentiation. In Plato's eyes every specialization, every sharply defined occupation, is vulgar (*banausos*) and such *banausia* is a characteristic feature of democratic society.⁷²

The victory of bourgeois over aristocratic manners in the course of the fourth century and during Hellenistic times brings with it a certain revaluation of the old conception of what is honourable; but there is still no honouring of work as such, nor is work ever supposed to have an educational value as alleged by modern bourgeois ethics; it is merely something that may be excused and overlooked in a man who is good at making money. Burckhardt has already noted that in Greece the bourgeoisie no less than the aristocracy despised work, whereas in the Middle Ages work was always respected by the bourgeoisie who, far from taking over the noble conceptions of honour, in the end imposed their own notion of professional honour upon the nobility. The value which a people attaches to work is, according to Burckhardt, determined by the conditions under which it developed its particular ideal of life. The ideal of modern Western civiliza-

tion derives from the bourgeoisie of the Middle Ages, which in the end outmatched the nobility in spiritual as well as in material goods. But the valuations of the Greeks derived from their heroic age and a world that knew not utility; they were a legacy of the warlike Greek aristocracy and were never altogether discarded.⁷³ Only after the ideal of the athletic contest lost its power in the crisis that coincided with the end of the Polis, does a radical new valuation of work, and thus of the plastic arts, begin to emerge. But in the ancient world this change was never completely carried through.

In classical Athens the economic and social position of the painters and sculptors persisted as it was in the Heroic and Homeric ages with hardly any alteration, in spite of the enormous importance which works of art came to have in displaying the power of their proud, victorious city. Art was still looked upon as a mere handicraft, and the artist as an ordinary artisan with no part or lot in the spiritual value of knowledge or education. He was still ill-paid, without secure abode, and led a wandering life, and so was a stranger and foreigner in the city that employed him. Bernhard Schweitzer explains this relatively unchanging social position of the craftsman-artist by the invariably unfavourable economic conditions in which the artist worked all through the age of Greek independence.⁷⁴ In Greece, the city state was and remained the sole large-scale patron for works of art; as such it had almost no competition to face since, with the relatively high production costs of works of art, there was no private individual who could maintain or even start competition against it. Between the artists, on the other hand, there was keen competition and this was by no means offset by competition between the different cities. Any production for the free market which could give the artist an assured position was out of the question, either within the single city or among the cities taken as a whole.

The change in the position of the artist, so noticeable under Alexander the Great, is directly connected with the propaganda made on that conqueror's behalf. The cult of personality which developed out of the new hero-worship redounded to the advantage of the artist both as a bestower and as a recipient of fame. The demand of Alexander's successors for art, and the wealth

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that was now accumulating in the hands of private individuals, led to a great increase in the consumption of art, thereby raising its economic value and the public's estimation of the artist. Finally, philosophical and literary education increasingly reached the circles of the craftsmen-artists; they began to separate themselves from the ordinary artisans and to form a group distinct from that of the tradesmen. The recorded anecdotes from the lives of the artists give us a good idea of the big change which had occurred since classical times. In the signatures to his paintings, Pharrhasius boasts of his skill in a self-complacent fashion that would have been quite impossible a short while before; Zeuxis' painting earned him a fortune greater than any painter before him; Apelles is not merely the court-painter, but also a confidant of Alexander the Great. Stories about eccentric painters gradually come into vogue and we eventually find symptoms of something like the modern adulation of the artist.⁷⁵ On top of, or rather behind all this, there is what Schweitzer terms the 'discovery of artistic genius', and which he attributes to the influence of Plotinus' philosophy.⁷⁶ Now Plotinus regards the beautiful as an essential attribute of the divine nature. According to his metaphysics, only the artist could restore to the fragmentary world of sense that completeness which it lost by becoming separated from God.⁷⁷ It is evident how greatly the artist must have gained in prestige through the spread of such a doctrine; he regains the aura of the divinely inspired seer which had surrounded his person in primitive times. He seems once again to be God-possessed, with the grace of the knowledge of hidden things, as formerly in the age of magic. The act of artistic creation becomes a sort of *unio mystica* and is separated more and more from the world of ratio. As early as the first century, Dio Chrysostom compares the artist to the Demiourgos (world creator). Neoplatonism elaborates this parallelism with increasing emphasis on the creative element in the artist's achievement.

This turn of affairs explains the division of mind characterizing the attitude of the later periods, especially of the imperial and final periods, towards the artist. During the Roman Republic and the early Empire, the current estimate of manual work and of the artist's calling was the same as in Greece of the heroic,

aristocratic and democratic periods. But in Rome, whose oldest traditions reflected the life of an agricultural people, the idea of all work being contemptible had no direct connection with the primitive conditions of perpetual warfare. For the sense of historical continuity with that age had been completely broken, since it was followed by a period in which even the richest and most distinguished Romans worked on their own land.⁷⁸ Still the warlike peasant population of Rome in the third and second centuries B.C., in spite of its intimate acquaintance with manual work, had no great leaning towards art or appreciation of the artist. Only with the change to money economy and urban culture, and with the Hellenizing of Rome, is there any rise in the status of the poet first and then gradually of the painter and sculptor also. And this change only becomes conspicuous in the Augustan age, with its conception of the poet as a 'vates' and with its patronage of the arts on a grand scale, both by the court and by private individuals. Even then the social estimation of the plastic and graphic arts, in comparison with poetry, is relatively low.⁷⁹ Amateur painting by distinguished personages is indeed increasingly common—even among the emperors, Nero, Hadrian, Aurelius, Alexander Severus and Valentinian I are all given to this fashionable hobby—but sculpture, presumably because of the bodily exertions and more elaborate apparatus it requires, continues to be regarded as an unsuitable occupation for a gentleman. And even painting is only considered respectable as long as it is not practised for gain. Successful painters refuse to take reward for their work, and Plutarch claims that Polygnotus, for example, was not ungentlemanly (*banausos*), because he decorated a public building with frescoes without asking for any reward.

Seneca still maintains the old classical distinction between the artist and his work—'We offer prayers and sacrifices before the statues of the gods, but we despise the sculptors who make them'⁸⁰—and Plutarch says something very similar—'No generous youth, when contemplating the Zeus of Olympia or the Hera of Argos, will desire to become a Phidias or a Polycletus.' This is clear enough in respect of the painters and sculptors, but Plutarch goes on to say that such a youth will not wish to be an

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Anacreon, a Philemon, or an Archilochus either; though we enjoy their works, they are not, he says, themselves necessarily worthy of esteem.⁸¹ This putting the poet on the same level as the sculptor is thoroughly unclassical and shows how inconsistent the late Empire is in such matters. The poet here seems to share the low estimation of the sculptor because he, too, is a specialist, working to established rules and translating a divine inspiration into words by means of a rationalized technique. And the same division of mind which pervades Plutarch's writings is also found in Lucian's *Dream*, where Sculpture is represented as a common dirty woman, but Rhetoric as a shining ethereal being; yet Lucian, in contrast to Plutarch, asserts that in the statues of the gods we reverence their creators.⁸² Any recognition of the artist's personality which appears in these dicta is evidently due to the aestheticism of the Empire, and indirectly perhaps to Neoplatonism or similar philosophical teachings. But the depreciation of the plastic and graphic artist continues and never quite disappears, showing that the ancient world, even in its latest period, still clung to the primitive valuation of 'conspicuous leisure' and, in spite of its aesthetic culture, was incapable of forming anything like the Renaissance and modern conception of genius. For only when this conception becomes current, is the form and technique through which the personality of genius chooses to express itself of any consequence. Then all that matters is that it should express itself or even merely give some indication of that which refuses to be expressed.

CHAPTER IV

THE MIDDLE AGES

1. THE SPIRITUALITY OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

THE unity of the Middle Ages as a historical period is quite artificial. In reality they fall into three entirely distinct cultural periods—the natural economy of the early Middle Ages; the courtly chivalry of the high Middle Ages; and the urban bourgeois culture of the late Middle Ages. At any rate, the divisions between these three epochs go deeper than those which mark the beginning and the end of the Middle Ages as a whole. Not merely is this the case, but the events that sunder these periods from one another—the emergence of a knightly nobility of service along with the change from natural economy to urban money economy, the awakening of lyrical sensibility and the rise of Gothic naturalism, the emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the beginning of modern capitalism—are of greater importance in accounting for the modern outlook upon life than all the spiritual achievements of the Renaissance,

Most of the features which are customarily regarded as being characteristic of medieval art, such as the desire for simplification and stylization, the renunciation of spatial depth and perspective, the arbitrary treatment of bodily proportions and functions, are in reality only characteristic of the early Middle Ages; as soon as the urban money economy and bourgeois way of life come to prevail they no longer hold good. The sole element of importance which does dominate the Middle Ages before and after that epoch-making change is the metaphysically based world-view. At the transition from the early to the high Middle Ages, art emancipates itself from most of the limitations imposed upon it, but it still retains a deeply religious and spiritual character, being

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the expression of a society still thoroughly Christian in feeling and hieratic in organization. Throughout the whole period the spiritual sway of the clergy remains, in spite of heresy and sectarianism, without a rival, and the prestige of their monopoly of the means of salvation, the Church, remains essentially unimpaired.

But the transcendental world-view of the Middle Ages did not come suddenly into full flower with the coming of Christianity. The art of early Christian times had none of that metaphysical transparency which is of the very essence of the Romanesque and Gothic styles. The 'spirituality' of this art, in which scholars have tried to find all the essentials of the later medieval conceptions of art,¹ is in reality only the same indefinite sort of spirituality which inspired the last centuries of paganism. The 'spiritual' attitude of these centuries did not give rise to a complete supernatural system, displacing the natural order of things; at most, it expressed an increased interest in and susceptibility to the stirrings of the human soul. The forms of ancient Christian, as of late Roman, art are psychologically, not metaphysically expressive; they are expressionistic but not revelatory. The wide open eyes of late Roman portraits express intensity of soul, spiritual tension, a life that is strongly emotional; but it is a life which is without any metaphysical background and as such has no inner relation to Christianity. It is in fact the product of conditions which obtained long before Christianity emerged. The tension which Christian doctrine resolves was already beginning to be felt in the Hellenistic age; though Christianity soon produced answers to the questions that troubled those times, the work of many generations was needed before those answers could be expressed in forms of art—these were by no means simultaneous with the enunciation of the doctrine itself.

Early Christian art during the first two or three centuries of its existence was merely a development or even a variant of late Roman art. So great is the similarity between late pagan and early Christian work that the decisive change of style must have occurred between the classical and post-classical, not between the pagan and Christian eras. In the works of the later Empire, above all those of the age of Constantine, the essential features of early

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Christian art are anticipated—its impulse towards spiritualization and abstraction, its preference for flat, bodiless, shadowy forms, its demand for frontality, solemnity and hierarchy, its indifference to the organic life of flesh and blood, its lack of interest in the characteristic, the individual and the species. In short, there is the same unclassical will to represent the spiritual rather than the sensible which is found in the paintings of the Catacombs, the mosaics of the Roman churches and the earliest Christian manuscripts. The course of development runs from circumstantial pictures of a situation in the later classical times to a concise record of facts in the latest pagan times and finally to schematic symbols, as of a seal, in early Christian art. Starting with the early Empire, we can watch step by step the process by which the idea becomes more and more important than the outward form, and the forms gradually develop into a kind of hieroglyphic script. The road that carries Christian art further and further from the realism of classical art forks in two different directions. One line of development produced the symbolism which is not so much concerned to represent as to conjure up the spiritual presence of the sacred personages by translating every detail of the scene into a code-language of salvationist doctrine. The spiritual value which the work of art is thought to gain by this translation explains the otherwise unintelligible characteristics of early Christian art—its distortion of natural size and adjustment of proportions to the spiritual significance of the objects portrayed, its so-called ‘reversed perspective’ which represents the principal figures when further away from the onlooker on a bigger scale than the subordinate figures in the foreground,² the ostentatious front view which it gives to the important figures, its summary treatment of merely circumstantial details, etc. The second line of development evolved an epical or illustrative style which aims at calling the various scenes, actions and incidents vividly to mind. In fact, the reliefs, paintings and mosaics of the early Christian epoch are either objects of devotion or else tales from the Bible and the legends of the saints. In these the artist’s whole efforts are directed to a clear and distinct rendering of the action itself; for example, in the miniature from the Rossano Gospel-book, that portrays Judas bringing back the

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pieces of silver, one of the front pillars supporting a canopy is partly cut away to show the high priest, although he is supposed to be sitting behind the pillar. The painter was obviously more concerned to show clearly the high priest's gesture of rejection than to draw correctly details which have nothing to do with the action.³

We are now presented, at least in the early stages, with a simple, popular type of art, recalling in many of its features the picture story-telling from Trajan's Column. Popular though it was in its origins, this style was increasingly adopted for official works of art at Rome, so that the early Christian art, primarily destined to suit the taste of the lower classes, was distinguished from the art of the social élite not so much by its tendency as merely by its quality. The pictures of the Catacombs, in particular, must have been almost entirely work by simple artisans, amateurs and daubers whose qualifications consisted in their religious zeal rather than in any positive talent for work; but a degeneration both of taste and technique is to be seen in the art of the old cultured classes as well. We are faced here by a break in the course of history similar to that which occurred in our own time when impressionism was abandoned in favour of expressionism; the art of the age of Constantine seems as rude, when compared with that of the early Empire, as does a picture by Rouault when compared with one of Manet. Both these historical changes originated in a change in the sentiments of an urban, cosmopolitan society, whose last vestiges of solidarity had been undermined by capitalism, and now, tormented by the fear of extinction, begins to put its trust in supernatural aid. Such a society, living in an atmosphere of impending calamity, tends to show more interest in new spiritual content than in the old refinements of form. In late Roman times, this atmosphere was no less plainly manifest in pagan than in Christian art; the only difference was that works executed for well-born and well-to-do Romans were still the creation of real artists, who would hardly have been willing to work for the poverty-stricken congregations of the Christians. Even in cases where they were not personally averse from Christian ideas and were prepared to work for a small reward or none, they would still be disinclined to work for

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the Christians, who required of them that they should give up the portrayal of heathen divinities altogether, a concession which no artist of any repute or position would be at all likely to make.

Those scholars who are determined to find the metaphysical world-view of the Middle Ages in the earliest Christian art interpret all its obvious defects as against classical art as being simply due to conscious and deliberate choice; Riegl's theory of 'artistic intention' (*Kunstwollen*) leads them to regard every failure of the power of imitative expression as a spiritual gain and a sign of progress. Their principle is, wherever a certain style seems incapable of solving a particular problem, to enquire whether this style was really intended to solve the problem in question. Now, this principle is undoubtedly one of the most fruitful ideas in the doctrine of 'artistic intention'; its value, however, is that of a working hypothesis and it should not be pressed beyond proper limits; it is clearly absurd to interpret it in such a way as to deny all possibility of a gap between the artist's intention and his power of execution.⁴ There can be no question that such a gap existed in early Christian art. What has been praised in it as deliberate simplification, masterly concentration or conscious idealizing and intensifying of the actual is in reality often just incapacity and poverty, just a helpless inability to render natural forms correctly, and a primitive bungling of the drawing.

This clumsiness and ungainliness of early Christian art is not mastered until after the Edict of Toleration, when it became the official art of state and court, of aristocratic and educated circles. Then it even regains—for example, in the apse-mosaic of Sta Pudenziana—something of that very *kalokagathia* which, from its hatred for the classical fidelity to sense, it had not long since so decisively rejected. The doctrine that only the soul can be beautiful, while the body like everything else material is necessarily ugly and repulsive, is relegated to the background, at least for some little time after the recognition of Christianity. The Church, now rich and powerful, portrays Jesus and his disciples as majestic and dignified persons, just as if they were distinguished Romans, imperial governors or influential senators. In relation to ancient times, this art is even less of a novelty than the

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Christian art of the first three centuries was. It should rather be regarded as marking the first of those renaissances which cropped up continually throughout the Middle Ages, becoming from now on a leitmotiv in the history of European art.

Throughout the first few centuries of the Christian era, life in the Roman Empire continued to move with but little change along the same economic and social lines, and was nourished upon the same traditions and institutions as before. When the forms of property, the organization of labour, the sources of education and the methods of instruction remained practically unchanged, it would have been remarkable had any sudden change occurred in the current conception of art. The most that can be said is that a reorientation of life undermined the original coherence of the forms of ancient culture, but these forms still remained the sole vehicle of expression available, which one had to use if one wished to be understood. Christian art had nothing else available either and employed these forms, as one does a language, not because it wanted to preserve them, but just because they 'were at hand'.⁶ The old means of expression, as is so often the case with long-established forms and institutions, outlasted the spirit which had given them birth. Long after the spiritual content of life had become Christian, people still expressed themselves in the forms of the ancient philosophy, poetry and art. Thus in Christian culture there was, from the very beginning, a rift without parallel in the ancient Eastern and Greco-Roman cultures, for in these form and content were originated and developed *pari passu*; the Christian world-view, on the other hand, was compounded partly of a new, still undifferentiated psychological attitude, partly of thought forms of a refined, both intellectually and aesthetically over-ripe culture.

The new Christian ideal of life did not at first alter the outward forms of art, but did alter its social function. For the ancient world, a work of art had a significance that was primarily aesthetic, but for Christianity its significance was quite different. The autonomy of cultural forms was the first element of the ancient spiritual heritage to be lost. To the mind of the Middle Ages, religion can no more tolerate art as existing in its own right regardless of creed, than it can tolerate an autonomous

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science. As an instrument of ecclesiastical education, art was the most valuable of the two, at least where maximum diffusion was the aim. Strabo already said, '*Pictura est quaedam litteratura illiterato*'; and '*Pictura et ornamenta in ecclesia sunt laicorum lectiones et scripturae*' is still the dictum of Durandus. In the opinion of the early Middle Ages, art would be superfluous if everyone could read and follow an abstract chain of reasoning; art was originally looked upon just as a concession made to the ignorant masses who are so easily influenced by impressions of sense. It was certainly not allowed to be 'a mere pleasure to the eye', as St. Nilus put it. Its didactic character is the most typical feature of Christian art, as compared with that of the ancients; Greeks and Romans used it as an instrument of propaganda often enough, but it was never for them a mere vehicle of doctrine. In this respect the roads diverged from the very start.

The art forms themselves show no radical change until the fifth century and the dissolution of the Western Empire. The old Roman expressionism now develops into a style of 'transcendental statement'.⁶ The emancipation of art from reality is now complete; the total rejection of all intention to reproduce reality goes so far as often to recall the geometrical art of early Greece. The composition of the picture is once again subordinated to a principle of decorative order which, however, no longer simply expresses an aesthetic quality of rhythm, but some higher plan, some harmony of the spheres. The artists are no longer content with mere decorativeness, with even spacing of the figures, symmetrical arrangement of the groups, rhythmical balancing of gestures, pleasing composition of colours; all such principles of composition play a preliminary and subordinate rôle in the new system as it finally emerges in the nave of Sta Maria Maggiore. We have here scenes that take place in a peculiar medium without light and air, in a space without depth, perspective and atmosphere, whose flat, shapeless figures are without weight and shadow. All attempt to produce the illusion of a consistent piece of space is now altogether discarded; the figures do not act upon one another in any way and the relations between them are purely ideal. They become far more stiff and lifeless,

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and at the same time far more solemn, more spiritualized, more remote from life and from this earth. Most of the devices by which these effects are achieved, above all the reduction of the spatial depth, flatness and frontality of figures, economy and simplicity of design—all these were known to late Roman and early Christian art; but now they all coalesce and form the elements of a new style of their own. Formerly they were found in isolation, or at least only employed if a particular situation seemed to require them,⁷ and were always in open and unresolved conflict with naturalistic traditions and recollections; but here the flight from the world is fully accomplished and all is cold, stiff, lifeless form—although instilled with a very intense and very essential life through death of the fleshly Adam and awakening of a new spiritual man. It all reflects the words of St. Paul, ‘I live, but not I but Christ liveth in me’. The ancient world and its joy in sense is now abolished; the old glory departed; imperial Rome in ruins. The Church now celebrates her triumph, not in the spirit of the Roman nobility, but in the sign of a power which pretends to be not of this world. Only now that the Church is absolute mistress, does she produce an artistic style which has hardly any connection with that of the ancient world.

2. THE ARTISTIC STYLE OF BYZANTINE CAESAROPAPISM

During the migration of the peoples the Greek Orient suffered no cultural breakdown like the West. The urban and money economy, which had almost completely collapsed in the Western Roman Empire, continued to flourish in the East and was in fact more vigorous than ever before. The population of Constantinople rose to over a million as early as the fifth century and the reports of its wealth and grandeur by contemporaries sound like a fairy tale. For the whole of the Middle Ages, Byzantium was the wonderland of unlimited treasure, palaces glittering with gold and endless festivities: it served as an example of official splendour to the whole world. The means which made this magnificence possible flowed from trade and commerce. Constantinople was a

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metropolis in the modern sense to a far greater extent than Rome: a city with an internationally mixed and cosmopolitanly minded population, a centre of industry and export, a nodal point of foreign trade and long-distance communications,⁸ and, incidentally, a genuinely Oriental city at the same time, whose inhabitants would have found it impossible to understand why trade was regarded as a degrading pursuit in the West. With its monopolistic controls, even the court formed a great industrial and commercial enterprise. And the limitations placed on economic freedom by these monopolies led to the real source of private wealth being landed property, not trade,⁹ in spite of the capitalistic structure of Byzantine economy. The big profits derived from commerce accrued not to private persons but to the state and the imperial household. The limitations imposed on private enterprise consisted not merely in the fact that, since the reign of Justinian, the manufacture of certain silk materials and trading in the most important food-stuffs were confined to the state, but also in the regulation which left the whole organization of production and commerce to the city administration and the guilds.¹⁰ The claims of the exchequer were by no means satisfied, however, by the state monopoly in the most profitable branches of industry and commerce; the treasury extracted the major part of its profits from private enterprise in the form of taxes, rates, duties, patent-fees, etc. It was therefore impossible for mobile private capital ever to become effective. At the most, the autocratic economic policy of the Crown allowed the landowner to remain unmolested and uninterfered with on his country estate, whereas in the city everything was most strictly supervised and regulated by the central government.¹¹ Thanks to its regular income from taxation and its rationalized state undertakings, Byzantium worked with an absolutely balanced budget and had a supply of money at its disposal which, in contrast to the Western countries in the early and high Middle Ages, made it possible for it to suppress all particularistic and liberalistic aspirations. The Emperor's power was based on a strong mercenary army and an efficient civil service, which it would have been impossible to maintain without the state's regular income. To them Byzantium owed its stability and the Emperor

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both his economic freedom of action and his independence of the great landowners.

These conditions explain why the dynamic and anti-traditionalistic tendencies usually associated with trade and communications and with an urban money economy were not able to make any headway in Byzantium. Urban life, which normally has a levelling and emancipating effect on the population, here became the source of a strictly disciplined, conservative culture. Thanks to Constantine's pro-urban policy, Byzantium acquired from the very start a different social structure from that of the cities of classical antiquity or of the high and late Middle Ages. Above all, the law which connected landed property in certain parts of the kingdom with the possession of a house in Constantinople, resulted in landowners moving to the city; and this led in turn to the development of a separate urban aristocracy, with a more loyal attitude to the Emperor than that shown by the nobility in the West.¹² This materially satisfied conservative class also weakened the mobility of the rest of the population and helped very largely to make it possible for the typical culture of an absolute monarchy, with its standardizing, conventional and static tendencies, to arise and maintain itself in such an intrinsically unstable centre as Constantinople.

Caesaropapacy was the prevailing form of government under the Byzantine Empire: that is, the union of secular and spiritual power in the hands of a single autocrat. The dominion of the Emperor over the Church was based on the doctrine of divine right developed by the Fathers of the Church and proclaimed as law by Justinian, which replaced the old myth of the divine descent of the king, now regarded as incompatible with the Christian faith. For if the Emperor was no longer allowed to be 'divine', he could still be God's deputy on earth, or, as Justinian himself liked to be called, his 'arch-priest'. Nowhere in Western Europe had the state been so much a theocracy, never in modern history has the service of the temporal lord been so essentially part of the service of God as here. In the West the Emperors were always merely secular rulers, and always had a rival, if not an open enemy, in the Church. In the East, on the other hand, they stood at the head of all three hierarchies—the Church, the

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army and the government¹³—and regarded the Church merely as a 'department of state'.

The spiritual-secular autocracy of the Eastern Roman Emperor, which often made the most unreasonable demands on the loyalty of its subjects, had to be displayed in public in order to stimulate popular imagination, had to be clothed in imposing forms and shelter behind a mystic ceremonial. The Oriental Hellenistic court, with its unapproachable solemnity and a rigid etiquette which forbade any kind of improvisation, was just the right setting for such ostentatious effects. But in Byzantium the court was the centre of all intellectual and social life even more exclusively than it ever was in the Hellenistic age. The biggest and in fact the only commissions for the more exacting works of art and even the more important commissions for the Church were given by the court. Not until Versailles was art again to become so entirely centred on a court. But nowhere else was art so exclusively a royal concern and so little the art of an aristocracy as here, nowhere else has it ever again become so rigidly and inflexibly a form of ecclesiastical and political loyalty. The aristocracy was nowhere so dependent on the monarch as here, nowhere was it so absolutely an aristocracy of officials, a class of bureaucrats and functionaries specially created by the Emperor to provide employment for his favourites; it was, therefore, in no way an exclusive, isolated caste, a hereditary aristocracy, in fact it was not an aristocracy at all in the strict sense of the word. The Emperor's autocracy allowed no hereditary privileges to flourish. The aristocratic and influential class was always identical with the particular civil service in office; a man enjoyed privileges only so long as he was in official employment. For this reason, we should always speak, in connection with Byzantium, of the influential men of the Empire, instead of a nobility as such. The Senate, the political representation of the upper class, was recruited at first only from civil servants and only later, when landed property had attained a privileged position, from landowners as well.¹⁴ But, in spite of the special favours which the landowners enjoyed as compared with the industrial and merchant class, it is no more feasible to speak of a landed aristocracy here than of any other kind of hereditary aristocracy.¹⁵ An official

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position was the indispensable link between wealth and social influence. To be reckoned as belonging to the aristocracy, the rich landowners—and only the landowners were really rich—had to buy an official title, if they could acquire one in no other way. The officials, for their part, had to try to acquire a country estate in order to make themselves economically secure. In this way, such a complete fusion of the two leading classes took place that in the end all landowners were officials and all officials landowners.¹⁶

It would never have been possible for Byzantine court art to become the Christian art *par excellence*, if the Church itself had not become an absolute authority and had not felt itself to be mistress of the world. In other words, the Byzantine style was only able to gain a footing everywhere where there was a Christian art, because the Catholic Church in the West desired to become the power the Emperor was already in Byzantium. The artistic aim of both was the same: that art should be the expression of an absolute authority, of superhuman greatness and mystic unapproachability. The endeavour impressively to represent official personalities who demanded respect and reverence of the people, a tendency which had made itself felt increasingly since the later years of the Empire, reaches its climax in Byzantine art. The method used in the attempt to achieve this aim was, in the first place, frontality, as it had been in Ancient-Oriental art. The psychological mechanism which this method sets in motion is twofold: on the one hand, the rigid attitude of the figure portrayed frontally induces a corresponding spiritual attitude in the beholder; on the other hand, by this approach, the artist manifests his own reverence for the beholder, whom he imagines, supremely, in the person of the Emperor, his employer and patron. This deference is the inner meaning of frontality even when, and in fact above all when—as a result of the simultaneous functioning of the two mechanisms—the personality portrayed is the ruler himself, when, paradoxically, the respectful attitude is assumed by the very person it is really intended to honour. The psychology of this self-objectivization is the same as when the king himself most strictly observes the etiquette which revolves around his own person. By means of frontality every figure-representation takes on to some extent the

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features of a ceremony. The formalism of ecclesiastical and of courtly ritual, the solemn gravity of a way of life regulated by asceticism or by despotism, the attempt of the spiritual or the secular hierarchy to create symbols of their authority, make the same demands on art and find expression in the same stylistic forms. Christ is represented in Byzantine art as a king and Mary as a queen; they wear royal and costly robes and sit reserved, expressionless and forbidding on their thrones. The long row of apostles and saints approaches them in slow and solemn rhythms, exactly like the Emperor's and Empress's train in court ceremonies. Angels attend and form processions in strict order, exactly like the spiritual dignitaries in ecclesiastical ceremonial. The figures are forbidden by an inviolable ritual from moving freely, from stepping out of the uniform line or even looking to one side. Everything here is awe-inspiring in its regal magnificence with all human, subjective and arbitrary elements suppressed.

This ritual found paradigmatic expression in the dedicatory mosaics in S. Vitale, which, in this respect, have never been surpassed in later times. No classical or classicizing movement, no idealistic and no abstract art, has ever succeeded in expressing form and rhythm so directly and so purely. Everything complicated, everything dissolved in half-tones or twilight, is excluded here; everything is simple, clear and obvious; everything is contained within sharp, unblurred outlines and expressed without shades and valeurs. The story has been completely transformed into pageantry. Justinian and Theodora with their train present votive offerings—an unusual theme for the chancel of a church. But as the sacred scenes take on the character of courtly ceremonies in this Caesaropapist art, so the festivities of the court fit into the framework of ecclesiastical ritual without difficulty.

In architecture, especially in the interiors of churches, the same majestic and domineering spirit is expressed as in the mural mosaics. From the very beginning, the Christian church was different from the ancient temple in that it was more a parochial centre than a house of God and shifted the emphasis of the architecture from the outside to the inside of the building. But it would be wrong to see in this necessarily the expression of a

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democratic principle, and to declare the church to be a more popular type of building than the temple. The shifting of attention from outside to inside had already taken place in Roman architecture and is in itself no evidence of the social function of the building. The basilican lay-out which the early Christian Church adopts from the public building of the Romans, with its division of the interior into sections of different rank and value, and especially the separation of the choir, reserved for the clergy, from the rest of the building, is more in accordance with an aristocratic than a democratic outlook. But Byzantine architecture, which completes the formal pattern of the early Christian basilica by adding the cupola, leads to a further intensification of the hierarchical relation in which the different sections of the building are sharply divided from each other. The cupola, as it were, the crown of the whole structure, emphasises the break between the different parts of the interior.

On the whole, the miniature painting of the period shows the characteristics of the same solemn, pompous and abstract style as the mosaics; on the other hand, it is more animated and spontaneous in expression, and freer and more varied in subject-matter, than the monumental mural decorations. Incidentally, two different tendencies can be discerned in this miniature painting: that of large, full-scale, luxurious miniatures, which follow the style of the elegant Hellenistic manuscripts; and that of the less pretentious books, intended for monastic use, the illustrations of which are often limited to mere marginal drawings and conform, with their Oriental naturalism, to the simpler monastic taste.¹⁷ The comparatively modest means required for book illustration make it possible to produce for less highly placed and artistically more liberal-minded circles than the patrons who commission the expensive mosaics. Moreover, the more flexible and simpler technique allows a freer treatment, more open to individual experiment than the complicated and awkward procedure of the mosaic. The whole style of miniature painting can, therefore, be more natural and spontaneous than that of the pretentious church interiors;¹⁸ this also explains why the writing-rooms became the refuge of orthodox and popular art during the iconoclastic period.¹⁹

ICONOCLASM

It would be a misleading simplification of the facts, however, to deny all trace of naturalism in Byzantine art, even in the mosaics. The portraits which are part of their rigid compositions are often astonishingly lifelike and the harmonious way in which this conflict of styles is resolved is perhaps the most remarkable feature of this art. The portraits of the Emperor and his wife and of Bishop Maximian in the mosaics of S. Vitale make just as convincing an impression and are as lively and appealing as some of the best portraits of the later Roman emperors. In spite of all stylistic limitations, it was apparently no more possible to abandon truth to life, at least in the portraits, in Byzantium than in Rome. The figures could be presented in a frontal position, arranged according to abstract principles and left to become rigid with ceremonial solemnity, but in the case of portraits of well-known personalities it was found impossible entirely to ignore their characteristic personal features. We are dealing here, by the way, with what is already a late stage in the development of early Christian art, a stage in which an attempt is made to find the way to a new differentiation and to find it in the line of the least resistance, that is to say, in true to life portraiture.²⁰

3. CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF ICONOCLASM

The wasteful wars of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries, which required the co-operation of the landed gentry in order to keep the army up to strength, confirmed the power of the land-owners and led even in the East to a kind of feudalism. It is true that the mutual dependence of feudal lord and vassal which marked the Western feudal system was lacking here, but even here the Emperor became more or less dependent on the land-owners as soon as he no longer had at his disposal the means necessary for the raising of a mercenary army.²¹ The system of bestowing landed property as compensation for military service developed, however, only on a small scale in the Eastern Roman Empire. In contrast to the West, not the magnates and knights but the peasants and the common soldiers were enfeoffed here. The owners of latifundia, naturally, tried to absorb the estates

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owned by peasants and soldiers which arose in this way, as they had done in the West with freehold peasant property, and here too the peasants went for protection from the often intolerable burden of taxation to the great lords, as they had to in Western Europe because of the insecurity of their tenure. For their part, at least in the early stages, the Emperors made every possible effort to prevent the accumulation of landed property, above all, of course, in order not to fall into the powerful hands of the great landowners themselves. But their main effort during their long and desperate fight against the Persians, the Avars, the Slavs and Arabs was concentrated on the preservation of the army; every other consideration had to yield to this one overriding concern. The prohibition of image-worship was only one of their emergency measures.

Iconoclasm was really not a movement inimical to art: it did not persecute art as such but only a special kind of art; it merely fought against pictures with a religious content, and even in the period of the most rabid persecution, decorative paintings were still tolerated. The campaign had in the main a political background; the attack on art as such was a comparatively insignificant undercurrent in the total complex of motives—perhaps the least significant of all. In those places where the movement started, in any case, it played the smallest possible part even though it had a not altogether inconsiderable share in spreading the idea of iconoclasm. The aversion from the pictorial representation of the numinous, as well as the dislike for anything reminiscent of idolatry, was by no means so decisive an influence on the outlook of the later Byzantines, with their delight in pictures, as on that of the early Christians. Until the time when Christianity was recognized by the State, the Church had attacked the religious use of pictures on principle and only tolerated them in cemeteries under certain specific conditions. But even here portraits were prohibited, sculpture was shunned and paintings restricted to symbolical representations. In the churches the use of works of fine art was absolutely forbidden. Clement of Alexandria emphasizes that the second commandment is directed against pictorial representations of every kind and that is the criterion for the early Church and the Fathers. But after the

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reconciliation of Church and State there was no longer any fear of a relapse into idolatry and the visual arts could be put to the service of the Church, though even now not entirely without certain restrictions and prohibitions. In the third century, Eusebius still described the pictorial representation of Christ as idolatrous and contrary to Scripture. Self-contained pictures of Christ were comparatively rare even in the following century. Not until the fifth century did the production of this type of picture begin to flourish in any strength. Then, however, the image of the Redeemer became the religious representation par excellence and comes in the end to represent a kind of magic protection against the influence of the evil spirit.²² Another root of the iconoclastic idea, and one indirectly connected with the aversion from idolatry, was the early Christian refusal to accept the sensual-aesthetic culture of classical antiquity. This spiritual motive was formulated by the early Christians in countless ways, perhaps most characteristically of all by Asterius of Amasia, who condemned all pictorial representations of the Holy, because, as he thought, no picture could avoid stressing the material and sensual in the subject portrayed. 'Do not make a picture of Christ,' he warned; 'the humiliation of the Incarnation to which He submitted of his own free will and for our sake, was sufficient for Him to endure—rather let us carry around in our soul the incorporeal word.'²³

The campaign against the idolatry into which the veneration of images had developed in the East played a far greater part than all the factors mentioned so far. But even that was not the real cause of Leo III's worry. He was concerned not so much with the purity of religion as with the enlightening effects which he promised himself would follow from the prohibition of religious images. And even more important to his mind than the cause of enlightenment itself was his regard for those cultured enlightened circles of society which he hoped to win over to his side by the prohibition of the worship of images.²⁴ For in these circles a 'reformatory' outlook had spread under the influences of the Paulicians and protests were being raised against the whole sacramental system, the 'pagan' ritual and the institutional priesthood. Yet nothing seemed to them more pagan than

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the idolatry which was carried on with the images of the saints, and on this matter at least the puritanical peasant dynasty of the Isaurians was in complete agreement with the cultured class.²² A further factor which helped the spread of iconoclasm enormously was the military successes of the Arabs, who recognized no image-worship in their religion. The Mohammedan position found supporters, as the successful cause always does, and it became the fashion in Byzantium. Many people saw a connection between the enemy's successes and his religion, and thought they could learn his secret simply by following and watching him closely. Others perhaps wanted to assuage the wrath of the enemy by adopting his way of life. Most of them probably thought that the abandonment of idolatry would in any case do no one any harm. But the most important and in the final analysis the decisive motive behind the iconoclastic controversy was the fight which the Emperors were waging with their followers against the constantly increasing power of monasticism. In the East, the monks exerted nothing like so much influence on the intellectual life of the upper classes as in Western Europe. Secular culture in Byzantium had its own tradition linking it up directly with classical antiquity; it did not need the mediation of the clerics. The relationship between the monks and the common people was all the more intimate, however. These two, monks and people, formed a common front, which could, in certain circumstances, become a source of danger to the central authorities. The monasteries became places of pilgrimage to which people went with their questions, their worries and requests and to which they also brought their gifts. The greatest attraction of the monasteries was the miracle-working icons; to possess a famous image of a saint became an inexhaustible source of fame and wealth for a monastery. Naturally, the monks adopted only too gladly the popular religious customs, the cult of the saints, the worship of relics and images, in order to increase their influence as well as their income.

In his plans for founding a strong military state, Leo III felt himself hindered most of all by the Church and the monks. The princes of the Church and the monasteries were among the biggest landowners in the country and enjoyed freedom from

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taxation. As a result of the popularity of the monastic life, the monks were keeping many young men back from the army, the civil service and agriculture and were depriving the treasury of considerable revenue as a result of the constant endowments and donations they were receiving.²⁶ The Emperor, by forbidding the worship of images, deprived them of their most effective means of propaganda.²⁷ This measure affected them as the producers, owners and custodians of the images, but most of all as the guardians of the magic spell which the holy icons had woven around themselves. If the Emperor intended to succeed in realizing his totalitarian ambitions, his main task was to disperse this magic and the atmosphere in which it thrived. The chief argument which 'idealist' historians put forward against such an explanation of the iconoclastic controversy is that the persecution of the monks did not begin until three or four decades after the prohibition of image-worship and that under Leo III no direct hostilities were engaged against the monks themselves.²⁸ As though the monks had not already been affected painfully enough by the prohibition of image-worship in itself! It was neither necessary nor possible to attack them directly before they resisted the prohibition; but as soon as this happened, direct persecution was begun with no delay.

Iconoclasm was, therefore, by no means a puritanical, Platonic or Tolstoyan movement directed against art as such. It also did not lead to a standstill but merely to a new orientation in the practice of art; and the change even seems to have had a refreshing influence on artistic production, which had become excessively formalistic and monotonously repetitive. The purely decorative tasks to which painters were now restricted brought about a return to the Hellenistic decorative style and, as a result of the new freedom from ecclesiastical considerations, made a more vigorous treatment of natural subjects possible than had previously been authorized.²⁹ When these subjects then developed into hunting and garden scenes, the human figure was also depicted less rigidly, with more movement, and in a less flat and 'frontal' fashion. The second golden age of Byzantine art in the ninth and tenth centuries, which continued the naturalistic achievements of this secular period and applied them to ecclesi-

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astical painting, could therefore rightly be called a result of the iconoclastic movement.³⁰ Byzantine art soon became formally stereotyped again, however. But this time the conservative movement started not in the court, but in the monasteries, that is to say, in what had formerly been the very home of the freer, more unconventional and more popular approach. In earlier times courtly art had striven for firm, uniform and absolutely binding standards, now it became the turn of monastic art. Monastic orthodoxy won the day in the battle of the images and became conservative as a result of its victory, so conservative in fact that in essentials the icons of the Greek Orthodox monasteries were still being painted in the same manner in the seventeenth as in the eleventh century.

4. ART FROM THE AGE OF THE MIGRATIONS TO THE CAROLINGIAN RENAISSANCE

The art produced during the period of the migration of the peoples is out of date and behind the times compared with that of Christian antiquity; stylistically it had not advanced beyond the Iron Age. Never has such a profound conflict of artistic outlook been at work within such a small area, as in this epoch, when in Byzantium a strictly disciplined but technically highly skilled figurative art, and in Western Europe occupied by Germanic and Celtic tribes an abstract geometrism concentrating on the purely ornamental, was the normal form of expression. For however complicated and rich in invention this decorative art was with its multifariously entangled, plaited and spiral patterns, its animal bodies with intertwining limbs and human figures adorned with flourishes, from an evolutionary viewpoint, it did not advance beyond the La Tène period. It is, above all, its extraordinary poverty in figure-drawing—only in the Irish and Anglo-Saxon miniatures does the human figure occur at all—and then its abandonment of any attempt to give even the slightest bodily substance to the object portrayed, which make it seem so primitive. In spite of the explosive and often very expressive dynamism of its forms, it is and remains a paltry, playful, merely decora-

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tive art. Its 'secret Gothic' shares with the real Gothic nothing but the tension of an abstract interplay of forces, and certainly the two styles have nothing intrinsic and concretely spiritual in common. Whether a specifically Germanic style or, what seems to be more probable, a Scythian and Sarmatic ornamental style, merely transmitted and imitated by the Germanic tribes,³¹ is expressed in this lineal art, we are dealing with a phenomenon which implies the complete dissolution of the classical conception of art and which forms 'the most abrupt contrast to the artistic outlook of the Mediterranean region'.³²

Was the art of this period of the migrations a folk art as Dehio maintains?—It was a *peasant art*: the art of the peasant tribes which inundated the West, of a people still tied to primary production. If we are going to call all peasant art 'folk art' or if folk art means comparatively simple forms of expression intended for a culturally homogeneous public, then this art was 'folk art'. But if we understand by 'folk art' an activity not carried on by professional specialists, then it can in fact hardly be described as such. Most of the products of this art which have come down to us presuppose an artistic skill far exceeding any kind of dilettantism; it is quite inconceivable that they could have been achieved by artists without a thorough professional training and long practice. The Germans probably had only a few specialized craftsmen, and manual crafts were doubtless still carried on for the most part inside the home; but the production of artistic ornaments such as those which are extant could hardly have been a mere side-line.³³

The Germans were mostly free peasants cultivating their own fields; partly, however, they were already landlords with serfs working their land for them. There was no longer any question of 'communal farming' in this age of the migrations.³⁴ The conditions prevailing can only be described as undeveloped in so far as the whole culture was still on a purely agricultural level. Here too the geometric style was, as everywhere since the end of the Neolithic age, in accordance with the peasant way of life, but it did not presuppose here any more than anywhere else the outlook of a property-sharing community. The art of this period has no peculiar characteristics in comparison with the peasant art of

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other ages and other peoples, but it is remarkable that the geometric style of the Germanic peasants is not only continued in the miniature painting of the Irish monks, but is enhanced by the extension of its ornamental principle to the human figure. The distance from nature of this painting reaches and sometimes even surpasses the abstraction of early Greek geometrism. Not merely the non-figurative ornament, not merely plant and animal, but also human forms are turned into pure calligraphy and lose all trace of bodily and organic substance. But how is it to be explained that an art practised and refined over such a long period as that of the scholarly monks employed by a scholarly public remained stationary on the stylistic level of the migratory peoples? The main reason is probably that Ireland was never a Roman province and therefore had no direct share in the fine arts of classical antiquity. Most of the Irish monks will probably never have seen any Roman sculpture, and Roman or Byzantine illuminated manuscripts will not have reached Ireland very often—in any case not often enough to form the basis of an artistic tradition. Thus the abstract formalism of the art of the migration period did not meet here even with as much resistance as it did on the Continent in the shape of Roman art. A further factor which explains the 'peasant' geometrism of the Irish miniatures is connected with the specific character of the Irish monastic rule, which was different from Continental and especially Byzantine monasticism. The Greek monasteries were situated near the cities and took an active part in city life, commerce and international intellectual movements; their members did only light manual labour and had nothing in common with the rural way of life. The Irish monks, on the other hand, were still half-peasants. Patrick himself was the son of a landowner with medium-sized property, the son of a 'rusticus', and he observed the very letter of the strict Benedictine rule when founding his monasteries. But it is remarkable that early Irish poetry, which stands on the same cultural level as the miniature painting of the monks, reveals such a lively feeling for nature that it is possible to speak in relation to it not only of accurate naturalism but even of a highly sensitive, quickly responsive impressionism. It is difficult to understand how two such different phenomena could belong

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to one and the same culture: on the one hand, the miniature paintings, in which every natural form is immediately turned into a mere ornament, and, on the other, a description of nature such as the following:

‘Tiny sound, lovely sound, tender music of the universe, a cuckoo with its sweet voice in the treetops; little sunshafts are playing in the sunbeam, the young cattle have fallen in love with . . . of the mountain.’³⁵

The only explanation of this discrepancy is that here too, as so often, evolution does not run parallel in all the different forms of art and that here too we have one of those historical periods the artistic manifestations of which cannot be reduced to the common denominator of a single style. The degree of naturalism in the different arts and genres of a period depends not only on the general cultural level of the period, not even if its sociological structure is uniform, but also on the nature, age and special tradition of each individual art and genre. To describe an experience of nature in words and rhythms or in lines and colours is by no means one and the same thing. An age may be successful in the one and fail in the other, may enjoy a still comparatively spontaneous and direct relationship to nature in the one art form when this same relationship has already become conventional and stereotyped in the other. The Irish, who discovered such poetic images as ‘the little bird has let a whistling note resound from the tip of its shining yellow beak; the blackbird sends out a cry over Loch Láig from the yellow bushy tree’³⁶ and spoke of such things as the ‘footwear of swans’ and the ‘winter’s coat of the ravens’,³⁷ drew and painted birds of which it is difficult to say if they are supposed to represent chickens or young eagles. Absolute parallelism of stylistic approach in the different arts and genres presupposes a level of development on which art no longer has to wrestle for the means of expression, but is able, to a certain extent, to choose freely among the different possibilities of formal treatment. In the Palaeolithic age there will have been nothing in contemporary poetry—if there was any poetry at all—to compare with the highly developed naturalism in the painting of the same period. Again, in the old Irish poetry the metaphorical

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power of the language produced images of natural life, for which the art of painting, based on the ornamental style of the migration period, lacked the means of expression. In their poetry the Irish were dependent on quite a different tradition than in their painting. The poets will have been familiar with Latin nature lyrics or with poems derived from Latin poetry, whereas all the painters knew, to start with, was the geometric style of the Celtic and Germanic peasant tribes. But poets and painters will also have belonged to different social and cultural classes, and this difference must have influenced their approach to nature. We know, on the one hand, that the painters of the miniatures were simple monks, and we may assume, on the other hand, that the authors of both the epic poems and the nature poems were active as professional poets, that is to say, they belonged either to the class of the highly esteemed court poets or to that of the probably less highly regarded bards, who were nevertheless still reckoned members of the upper class on account of their learning.³⁸ The assumption that these poems had the same kind of origin as folk poetry³⁹ has its source in the romantic idea that 'natural' and 'folk-like' are interchangeable concepts, whereas in reality they are more opposites than alternatives. The same directness of vision which we find in the Irish nature lyrics is also evident in the following passage from the life of a saint, that is to say, in a literary work that has obviously nothing to do with folk poetry. The passage deals with an episode in which a child playing on the seashore falls into the water but is saved by the saint, and it then describes how it plays with the waves as it sits in the middle of the sea on a sandbank:

'For the waves could reach up to him and laugh around him, and he was laughing at the waves, and putting the palm of his hand to the foam of the crests and he used to lick it like the foam of new milk.'⁴⁰

After the barbarian invasions a new society arose in the West with a new aristocracy and a new cultural élite. But whilst this was developing, culture sank to a low-water mark unknown in classical antiquity and remained unproductive for centuries. The old culture does not come to a sudden end: Roman economy,

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society and art decay and disappear gradually and the transition to the Middle Ages takes place step by step and almost unnoticed. The continuity of development is best expressed in the survival of the late Roman economic structure:⁴¹ agriculture with large-scale property and the *coloni* remain the basis of production.⁴² The old settlements remain inhabited and the ruined cities are even partially rebuilt. The use of the Latin language, the validity of Roman law and, above all, the authority of the Catholic Church, which becomes a model for the political administration—all these remain intact. On the other hand, the Roman army and the old administration have to go. An attempt is made to preserve existing institutions, the financial administration, the legal and police system, in the new state, but the old posts—at any rate, the most important of them—have to be filled by new officials, and the new aristocracy grows very largely out of this new civil service.

The Germanic conquests brought about the transition within the German people itself from the old tribal state to the absolute monarchy. The newly established states led to changes which enabled the victorious kings to make themselves independent of the popular assembly of freemen and, following the example of the Roman emperors, to raise themselves above both the people and the nobility. They regarded the conquered territories as their own private property and their followers as ordinary subjects over whom they had absolute personal control. But their authority was by no means secure from the very start. Every single one of the old tribal chiefs might come forward as a rival and every member of the old aristocracy was potentially dangerous. They rid themselves of this danger by very largely exterminating the old tribal aristocracy, which must already have suffered enormous losses in the wars of conquest. The assumption that nothing at all survived of the old nobility,⁴³ and that, except for the Merovingians, there were no more noble families, is probably exaggerated,⁴⁴ but the survivors were certainly no longer a danger to the king. Nevertheless, under the Merovingians there must already have been a new and large ruling class. How did it come into being? And of what kind of social elements did it consist? Except for the remnants of the Germanic hereditary

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nobility, it was made up above all of the members of the probably only sparsely surviving Roman senator-class living in the occupied territories. In any case, many of the old Gallo-Roman landowners retained their properties and privileges even though the kings favoured the new official and military nobility. This official aristocracy formed not only the most influential but also the numerically most important section of the Frankish upper class. Since the establishment of the new state, the only way to new honours led by way of service to the kings; whoever was in the king's service counted for more than the others, and belonged automatically to the aristocracy. But this aristocracy was still no real nobility, for its privileges were liable to be forfeited and were by no means hereditary, were not based on birth and descent but merely on office and property.⁴⁵ It was also far from forming an ethnically uniform group; it was made up of Gallic, Roman and Germanic elements, and represented a class in which the Franks were given no preference at least as against the Romans. The freedom from prejudice of the kings went so far in this respect that they allowed and perhaps even aided and abetted people of the lowest origins, even escaped slaves, to attain the highest honours.⁴⁶ Such people were, at any rate, less dangerous to the kings' power and often more fitted to carry out the new tasks than the members of the old families.

From as early as the sixth century, individual functionaries, above all the highest administrative officials, the 'counts', were rewarded, apart from their salaries, with allocations from the royal estates. The land was certainly granted in the beginning only for a limited number of years, then for life and only after that as hereditary property. Gregory of Tours, our authority on the social conditions of the Merovingian period, does not mention any grants of land for military services, in other words, no endowments of a feudal nature.⁴⁷ The Merovingian benefice is still in the nature of a gift and not a security. But certain privileges and exemptions were soon connected with these grants of land. For to the extent that the state proved itself unable to protect the life and property of its subjects, the great landowners took over this function, arrogating to themselves in return the authority of the state within their own territory. Thus not only the royal lands

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but also the area in which the state had a say in affairs was diminished as the gifts of land increased. In the end, the king was master only on his own estates, which were often smaller than those of his most powerful subjects. Incidentally, this reshaping of power-relationships was in full accordance with the general development, which removed the centre of gravity of social life from the towns to the country.

The country is, in contrast to the town, unsuitable for the practice of art, above all for the fine arts which have a more than purely decorative function. In the country there are no proper tasks for art, no public and none of the necessary means. At any rate, the main reason for the stagnation of art under the Merovingian kings is the decadence of the towns and the lack of a permanent royal residence. The transformation of urban culture into a rural culture, a process which had already begun in the later years of the Empire, is now completed. The money economy of the cities of classical antiquity reverts to the domestic and natural economy of the big estates, where an attempt is made to become entirely independent of outside forces, of cities and markets. But the autarchy of the big estates is not primarily the result of the decline of the cities; on the contrary, the cities with their markets fell into ruin because the estate owners, who could not sell their produce owing to the shortage of money, prepared to produce as far as possible everything they needed for themselves and nothing more. In the end the decay of the depopulated cities went so far that the kings had to move out to their estates as they could not find or pay for the food to maintain themselves and their followers in the cities. The cities survived this crisis very largely as bishops' sees, but even if they were just able to maintain themselves, it is, in any case, symptomatic that during the whole Frankish epoch no single important city arose in the West, whereas in the same period the Arabs founded gigantic cities like Baghdad and Cordova.⁴⁸ Even the places where the kings resided from time to time, such as Paris, Orléans, Soissons and Rheims, were comparatively small and thinly populated. No court life developed in any of them. Nowhere did a need for buildings and monuments arise. Even the monasteries were still too poor to fulfil the functions of the court and the city. There was therefore

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no city, no court and no monastery where regular artistic activity might have developed.

In the fifth century there was still in existence everywhere a cultured aristocracy well versed in literary and artistic matters, but in the sixth century it disappeared almost completely; the new Frankish nobility was not in the least concerned with matters of education and culture. Not only the aristocracy but also the Church passes through a period of neglect and decay. Often even higher Church dignitaries could hardly read, and Gregory of Tours, who reports on this situation, himself writes a somewhat crude Latin—a sign that the language of the Church was already dead in the seventh century.⁴⁹ The schools run by laymen decline and are closed one by one. Soon there are no educational institutions at all, except for the cathedral schools, which the bishops have to maintain to secure a continuous supply of clergy. This was how the Church first acquired that educational monopoly to which it owes its extraordinary influence in the society of Western Europe.⁵⁰ The state becomes clericalized, in the first place simply because the Church provides and educates state officials, and the educated laity instinctively acquire the ecclesiastical outlook on life, because the cathedral and later the monastic schools are the only educational establishments to which they can send their children.

The Church still continued to give the most important commissions to artists. The bishops still had churches built, still employed builders, carpenters, joiners, glaziers, decorators and probably sculptors and painters as well. Owing to the lack of extant monuments, we can form no accurate idea of this artistic activity, but, if we may draw general conclusions from the few surviving illustrated manuscripts, it was limited to the somewhat second-hand continuation of late Roman art and the repetition of the art of the migration period. At this time no one in the West was any longer capable of representing a body plastically; everything is limited to pure surface ornament, to the interplay of lines and to calligraphy. The motifs used in decorative art are, in accordance with the prevalence of the rustic way of life, the forms of traditional peasant art: the circle and the spiral, intertwining ribbons and slings, fishes and birds, sometimes foliage and ten-

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drills, and that is the sole innovation in advance of the art of the migration epoch. These are also the themes of the goldsmith's art, to which most of the examples that have survived belong. Their relatively great number shows where the artistic interests of this primitive society lay. Art meant in the first place ornamentation and finery, ostentatiously decorated utensils and precious jewels. It served—as it often still does in a sublimated form in much more highly developed cultures—merely to show off the possession of power and wealth.

With the coronation of Charlemagne the nature of the Frankish monarchy undergoes a fundamental change. The secular power of the Merovingians is transformed into a theocracy and the Frankish king becomes the protector of Christendom. The Carolingians re-establish the weakened power of the Frankish kings but they are unable to break the power of the aristocracy because they partly owe their own position to it. The counts and magnates become vassals of the kings from the ninth century onwards, it is true, but their interests are often so opposed to those of the Crown that in the long run they are unable to keep their vows to the king. Their power and their wealth do not increase, but decrease as the power of the state grows. The central government, by leaving the administration of the country to them, lays claim to the official service of a class which must reveal itself sooner or later as the enemy of the state and which as such rules and governs all the more freely since an official hierarchy with lower and intermediary ranks is almost completely lacking. The king cannot do very much against the unruly counts, above all he cannot simply dismiss them, for they are not officials in the normal sense, but people with whom the peasantry feels that it has much in common, who have been the richest and most highly respected people in the district for generations and compared with whom the new officials would appear to be intruders.⁵¹ The king and the state are more particularly unable to prevent the peasants from making over their land to the magnates in increasing measure, in order to receive it back from them, as their protectors. The general tendency is towards the formation of latifundia and territorial principalities; and although the age of Charlemagne is still far distant from the final development of

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this tendency, the royal authority is already so weak that the monarch has once again to make a show of more power than he actually possesses. Above all, he has to appear in public as the supreme head of the new spiritual-secular state and to make his court the main centre of fashion and culture of the Empire.

In Aix-la-Chapelle, where a literary academy, an artists' workshop in the palace and the best scholars of the time are all gathered in one place, Charlemagne creates, as the prototype of the European court, a home for the Muses which, despite the great interest shown in art at the Roman and Byzantine imperial courts, represents a new departure. For the first time since Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius a ruler in the West not only takes a real interest in learning, art and literature but carries out a cultural programme of his own. In setting up literary academies, however, the Emperor had in mind the renewal of intellectual culture only indirectly, his real aim was the training of staff for his administrative machine. In these academies Roman literature was, therefore, considered primarily as a collection of models of good Latin style and was studied mainly with a view to acquiring fluency in the official language. As far as the institutions themselves are concerned, it has recently been doubted whether there ever was a 'palace school' in which, as used to be thought, the children of distinguished families were educated: the assumption that such a school actually existed is now attributed to a misunderstanding of the texts in which 'scholares', as is now maintained, means not the pupils of a '*schola palatina*' but the Emperor's protégés, young aristocrats who, as future soldiers and officials, receive their practical training at the court.⁵² On the other hand, it is beyond doubt that at the court of Charlemagne there was a literary society of poets and scholars, with regular meetings and competitions, which did in fact constitute a real academy; and we may also regard it as certain that a palace workshop was attached to the court in which illustrated manuscripts and art and craft objects were produced.

Charlemagne's whole cultural programme was part of a wider plan to revive the ideals of classical antiquity, the basic conception of which, although it was linked with the political idea of a renewal of the Roman imperium, was not merely the first com-

prehensive, but also the first creative re-assimilation of classical culture. The thesis that the Middle Ages never became aware of their distance from classical antiquity and always considered themselves its direct heirs⁵³ is untenable. The main difference between the Carolingian Renaissance and Christian antiquity lies precisely in the fact that it does not simply continue but that it rediscovers the Roman tradition. For the first time classical antiquity becomes a cultural experience with which is connected the consciousness of having rediscovered, in fact of having re-acquired, something that had been lost. This experience indicates the birth of Western man,⁵⁴ since it is not the actual possession but the struggle for the possession of classical culture which is his distinguishing mark. The age of Charlemagne contents itself with receiving the heritage of classical antiquity at second hand. The late Roman art of the fourth and fifth centuries and the Byzantine art of the following centuries form the storehouse of ideas and forms from which it draws its models and its inspiration. And although, in keeping with its lively mood of revival and rebirth, it has a special fondness for trying to imitate the proud and dashing attitudes of the Romans, it finds access to classical antiquity only through the refracted medium of Christian art. The most striking token of this break with classical antiquity is that the monumental sculpture of the Romans, for which the early Christians had already lost all understanding, also remains a closed book for the men of the Carolingian Renaissance. For this reason, Dehio thinks that the Carolingian assimilation of classical culture is no real renaissance but merely a continuation of late classical culture.⁵⁵ But Carolingian art does achieve one epoch-making innovation—as Dehio states himself⁵⁶—by overcoming the flat ornamental style of the migration epoch and reintroducing the human body in its full three-dimensional reality. This characteristic is in itself reminiscent more of classical than of Christian antiquity. In Carolingian art, we encounter, however, in contrast to the purely ornamental approach of the migration period, not only a figurative art but, in contrast to early Christian times, a partially illusionistic conception of art. It revives not only the monumental and statuesque feeling but also the impressionistic conception of antiquity. Beside the imposingly conceived

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and lavishly executed dedicatory pictures of the Emperors' Gospel-Books, we possess the rapid and vibrant pen-drawings of the Utrecht-Psalter which, though they have their stylistic source in Christian-Oriental models,⁵⁷ were unparalleled for impressionistic subtlety and expressionistic force in all the centuries since the end of the age of Hellenism. What is remarkable is not that this improvising method of representation was practised at the same time as the cool, imposing court style, but that, qualitatively, it was so much more impressive than the court art with its much more lavish technique, resources and format. It is obvious that a manuscript like the Utrecht-Psalter, with its simple, sketchy and uncoloured drawings, could not meet the luxury requirements of the court and that it was intended for a more modest circle, more interested in the illustrative than the ornamental side of art. The differentiation of manuscripts according to the size and technique of the miniatures, the distinction between 'aristocratic' manuscripts with whole-page multicoloured illustrations and 'popular' manuscripts with drawings mainly in the margins, which we had to make in our analysis of Byzantine art, is even more imperative here.⁵⁸ Of course, the different artistic quality of the work can be no more attributed to sociological conditions here than anywhere else; but the greater freedom of movement enjoyed by the artist in the world of unofficial art may have helped to increase the spontaneity and directness of the work. Just as the laborious, minute execution of the manuscripts *de luxe* leads to a static style, so the swift, sketchy manner of the 'cheaper' pen-drawings favours a dynamic, impressionistic approach.

The broad pictorial style of the whole-page miniatures, worked in thick body-colours, used to be called the manner of the palace school of Aix-la-Chapelle or Ingelheim or wherever it happened to be, and the sensitive, nimble impressionism of the Utrecht-Psalter the local style of the school of Rheims, which was more or less under Anglo-Saxon influence; not until it was established that even some of the luxury manuscripts produced with the greatest care originated in the writing-rooms of Rheims or its environs⁵⁹ did the geographical demarcation of the various styles lose the importance formerly attached to it. It is obvious that the source of the different styles must be sought more in the

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different social position of the patrons than in the different nationalities of the artists themselves or the different local traditions of the workshops. Apart from certain stylistic similarities, manuscripts of the most varied kinds, some of them in the exacting pseudo-classical court style, some in the simple, sketchy, monkish manner, were prepared in one and the same writing-room.

The palace workshop was undoubtedly the main centre of artistic activity; the Renaissance movement started here and the scriptoria of the monasteries seem to have been organized from here.⁶⁰ Certainly, it was only later on that the monastic workshops acquired a monopoly in this field. In the age of Charlemagne probably just as many monks worked in the palace workshop as later laymen did in the monasteries. At any rate, in the Carolingian period many writing-rooms must have been in use; not only the relatively large number of manuscripts preserved but also their varied artistic quality suggests that. Incidentally, it is a striking fact how much better, for example, the average sample of ivory carving is than that of the extant miniatures. The more difficult technique implies a higher standard of production; obviously, the dilettanti who found no difficulty in obtaining employment in the writing-rooms were not trusted with the more valuable materials.⁶¹ But the products of all these workshops have one feature in common, whether they are paintings, carvings or metal work: they are all comparatively small in size. At first sight this peculiarity seems incompatible with the tendency of court art to emulate the monumental style of classical antiquity, for this kind of art usually strives to attain outward as well as inward greatness. The preference for small-scale art in the Carolingian period has been linked with the still unstable and unsettled life of the time, with its nomadic character, and it has been recalled that nomadic peoples never have any monumental art but produce the smallest possible, easily portable decorative and ornamental objects.⁶² The 'nomadic' character of Carolingian culture is reflected in the subordinate position of the cities and the constant shifting of the royal residence, and these factors are sufficient, if not completely to explain, at least to make more intelligible this preference for small-scale work in art.

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5. THE EPIC POETS AND THEIR PUBLIC

According to Einhart, Charlemagne had the 'old barbaric songs' of bygone feuds and battles collected and recorded. These were evidently songs dealing with heroes of the migration period, Theodoric, Ermaneric, Attila and their brave warriors, which had already been worked up into more or less extensive epics in earlier times. In the days of Charlemagne the epic no longer suited the taste of cultured people; classical and learned poems were already more popular than epics. Even the king will have taken no more than a purely historical interest in the old epic songs, and the fact that he had them recorded only confirms that they were threatened with extinction. But Charlemagne's collection has also been lost. The next generation, Louis the Pious and his contemporaries, were no longer interested in these poems. The epic form had to be adapted to biblical materials and to express the clerical outlook in order not to disappear from literature altogether. Probably the collection commissioned by Charlemagne was edited by clergymen, and to judge from 'Beowulf', clerics had been occupied with the editing of heroic narratives even earlier. But the heroic poetry must have been preserved alongside monastic literature in another form, more akin to the original, before it came to life again in the courtly-chivalric epic. Above all, it must have appealed to a wider public than the purely literary poetry of the clergy and probably also to a wider public than the original heroic lay. It was suppressed by the court and the country nobility; if it survived anywhere, and it did, it can only have been among the lower classes. But however that may be, it only became popular in the centuries between the end of the heroic and the beginning of the chivalric age. And even then it did not become folk poetry in the real sense of the term; it remained in the hands of professional poets, who, despite their popularity, had almost nothing in common with the artless and impersonal way of the folk.

The 'folk epic' of romantic literary history originally had no connection at all with the common people. The prize-songs and heroic lays which are the source of the epic were the purest class poetry ever produced by a master class. They were neither created

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nor sung nor spread abroad by the 'folk', nor were they intended for or attuned to the character of the folk. They were absolute art-poetry and an aristocratic art. They were concerned with the deeds and experiences of a warrior upper class, they flattered its lust for fame and glory, mirrored its heroic *amour-propre*, its tragi-heroic moral outlook, and not merely addressed the only conceivable public but also borrowed their poets from it, at least at the outset. It is true that the old Teutons had, both before and contemporaneously with this aristocratic poetry, a communal poetry, a poetry of ritual forms, magic incantations, riddles, maxims and minor social lyrics, that is to say, dancing songs, songs of labour and choral songs, which they performed at banquets and funeral ceremonies. These forms constituted the common, and very largely undifferentiated possession of the whole people, although the common performance of them was not an indispensable characteristic.⁶³ The prize-song and the heroic lay seem, in contrast to this communal poetry, to have been first invented in the migration period, their aristocratic character is to be attributed to the social upheavals which were connected with the successful invasion and brought to an end the relative uniformity of the cultural conditions of the previous age. Just as the structure of society became more differentiated as a result of the new conquests, extensions of property and the establishment of new states, so a class-poetry developed alongside the communal forms of poetry and the impetus for this probably came from the new elements in the aristocracy. This poetry was not only the special possession of a privileged, exclusive and class-conscious stratum of society, but, in contrast to the older communal poetry, it was also a scholarly, individually differentiated art acquired by practice, the creation of professional poets serving the ruling class.

The first poets of the migratory and heroic age to emerge as distinct personalities were probably still warriors themselves and were among the king's personal followers,⁶⁴ at least in 'Beowulf' the princes and heroes take an active part in poetry. But soon these cultured amateurs and occasional poets were replaced by professionals who, from now on, belong to the permanent staff of the court households and are for the most part no longer warriors. The *scop*, i.e. the court poet of the Western and

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Southern Teutons, appears from the very outset as a specialist and an expert. The court *skald* of the Northern Teutons, however, remained a warrior whilst being a professional poet at the same time, and as the prince's confidential adviser, preserved some of the characteristics of the wise and knowledgeable singer of olden times. It appears all the more remarkable that the idea of personal authorship is more developed among the Northern Teutons than with the other Teutonic tribes, where the court singer sings some of his own songs and some by other poets without stressing the difference and without being asked by anybody about the authorship of the songs. It is only the actual performance that the listeners applaud. With the Norwegians, on the other hand, a sharp distinction is made between the poet and the reciter; they are not only familiar with but they even over-emphasize the pride of authorship and lay great stress on originality of invention. Here the names of the authors are preserved together with the works themselves: a phenomenon which does not occur elsewhere until the rise of the author-cleric and is perhaps connected, in the North, with the prestige which the poet enjoys as a warrior.

Probably even the Eastern Goths had professional poets. Cassiodorus mentions that Theodoric had sent the Frankish king Clovis a singer and harpist. We know from Priscus' description that such singers were active at the court of Attila. It is not clear from his report, however, whether they already held a really official position as poets. Nor do we know anything definite about the authority enjoyed by the professional poet with the Teutons in the heroic age. On the one hand, it is asserted that the poets and singers belonged to court society and stood in close personal relationship to the prince, but on the other hand, we are reminded that in 'Beowulf', for example, they are not even mentioned by name and that their prestige cannot, therefore, have been particularly great. What we know for certain is that the English court poet had had a firmly established official position from the eighth century onwards,⁶⁶ and this institution will have been adopted by all the Teutons sooner or later. Yet it did not last very long, for we soon hear of the wandering singer travelling from court to court and from castle to castle to entertain cultured society. But this change does not lead to such far-reaching

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results as one might imagine: the poems retain their courtly character, although the princes and heroes to whom they are addressed are different on each occasion. In any case, the professional element is more strongly emphasized by the wandering singer than by the permanently appointed court singer, whose relationship to court society remains ambiguous. But we must not, on any account, confuse the wandering court singer with the common or garden vagrant and the unkempt minstrel, who appears on the scene at a later period. The distance between the two types is not narrowed until the secular singer loses the favour of the courts and has to find his public in inn parlours and fairs.

After the evening banquet at the court of Attila there followed, according to Priscus, next to the prize- and war-songs, comic performances by the clowns, who are to be considered, on the one hand, as the heirs of the ancient mimes and, on the other, as the ancestors of the medieval minstrel. Perhaps in the early stages, the provinces of the serious and the humorous were nothing like so sharply divided as later on when, as a court official, the singer became more and more distinct from the mime only to approach this style again when he became a wandering minstrel. Among the reasons for the crisis to which the court singers succumbed in the eighth and ninth centuries is to be reckoned, apart from the hostile attitude of the clergy⁶⁶ and the decline of the small courts,⁶⁷ in the first place the competition of the mimes.⁶⁸ The cultured court singer of heroic lays disappears along with the heroic spirit of his public, but heroic poetry survives the heroic age and is more long-lived than the society to which it owes its origin. After the decline of the military-aristocratic culture, it turns from an exclusive class interest into a universal art. The fact that this declension was so easily brought about, and that the same kind of poetry could be understood and enjoyed by the upper and lower classes almost simultaneously, can only be explained by assuming that the difference in cultural standards between the rulers and the ruled cannot have been anything like so great as in later ages. It is true that from the very beginning the rulers lived in a different sphere from the people, but they were not yet so conscious of the gulf that divided them from the lower classes.⁶⁹

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The romantic theory of the heroic epic as a folk art was nothing but an attempt to explain its historical element. The romantics were not yet aware of the propagandist function of art. The idea that the military aristocracy of the great heroic age could have had a practical interest in poetry was quite foreign to them. With their 'idealist' outlook on life and letters they would never have brought themselves to admit that in their poetry these heroes were merely trying to enhance the prestige of their own kith and kin, that their interest in the poetic transmission of great events was by no means purely intellectual. And as, on the other hand, the romantic theorists could not assume that the poets of the heroic ballads and epics drew their material from chronicles—an idea that has only dawned on our age—all they could do was to explain the historical themes in the epic as based on a tradition which was supposedly derived directly from the events themselves and passed from mouth to mouth and generation to generation, until it finally developed into the finished narrative of the epic poems. The survival of the heroic narratives on the lips of the people was at the same time the simplest explanation of the subterranean existence which the epic led between its two manifestations in the age of the migrations and in the age of chivalry. Incidentally, for the romantic movement, even these manifestations—the finished poems—were merely stations in the progress of a thoroughly continuous and homogeneous development. In its view, what mattered for a true understanding of the whole process were not the resting-places but the uninterrupted growth, the living tradition, the life of the saga itself.

In his folklore mysticism, Jakob Grimm went so far as to regard it as inconceivable that a folk epic could ever have been 'composed'. He thought that it composed itself and imagined its development to have been similar to the germination and growth of a plant. The whole romantic movement agreed in thinking that the epic had nothing to do with an individual, reflecting poet practising his art as a skilled craft acquired by learning, and that it was the work of the unreflecting, unconsciously and spontaneously creative folk. It characterized folk poetry, on the one hand, as a collective improvisation, on the other, as a slow, steady

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organic process quite incompatible with the notion of discontinuous, deliberate steps attributable to a single individual. The folk epic was said to 'grow', by the transmission of the heroic saga from one generation to the next, and only to cease growing when it entered into literature proper. The term 'heroic saga' is used here to describe the form in which the epic is still completely in the possession of the people, and to which the epic poet owes the best part of his work. But the question is, even in the cases where the oral transmission of historical events may be taken for granted, not to what extent the poet makes use of the traditional material, but how much of this material can still be described as a 'saga'. The idea of a tradition being able to produce a long, homogeneous epic narrative without the co-operation of a consciously and deliberately creative poet, and enabling anyone exhaustively and coherently to re-tell such stories, is perfectly absurd. A finished, well-rounded and homogeneous narrative, however rough and ready the form in which it is presented, is no longer a saga but a poem and he who tells it for the first time is its creator.⁷⁰ It is, as Andreas Heusler has shown, a serious error to believe that the heroic narratives first pass anonymously from mouth to mouth as undeveloped sagas, are taken up by a professional poet and worked up into a poem. A heroic saga starts as a song, as a poem, and is re-told and added to as such; the epic is merely a later form, which in certain circumstances displaces the original shorter version, but is not fundamentally different.⁷¹ The really artless, unliterary saga is made up of nothing but sporadic, disconnected motifs, abrupt, loosely united historical episodes, and short undeveloped local legends. These are the bricks which can be contributed by the common people, but which contain as good as nothing of what constitutes a heroic poem and an epic.

As far as the French heroic epic is concerned, Joseph Bédier not only denies the existence of the kind of saga which refers directly to historical events but even that of the heroic lays, and declares that there is no reason to assume any version of the epics to have existed before the tenth century. The problem with which he too is concerned, as all research on the sagas has been since the romantic movement, is the origin of the historical

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elements of the epic. If, as he emphasizes, there has never been anything in the nature of a spontaneously self-developing saga, what has bridged the gap of the centuries between the events of the age of Charlemagne and the Charlemagne epics? How did the historical subject-matter come into the *chansons de geste*? How did the persons and events of the eighth century become known to the poets of the tenth and eleventh centuries? These questions, Bédier thinks, have never yet been answered satisfactorily, for the hypothesis that the sagas had already begun to take shape amongst the heroes' contemporaries is merely a clumsy and arbitrary attempt to overcome the dilemma presented by the problem of how it occurred to the poets to choose as the heroes of their works historical persons who had already been dead several hundred years.⁷²

Gaston Paris had already denied the existence of the oral tradition, but he could only bridge the gap between the historical events and the epics by accepting the existence of the heroic lays of the Wolf-Lachmann theory.⁷³ Bédier, like Pio Rajna before him,⁷⁴ denies that such heroic lays ever existed, at least in the French language, and attributes the historical element in the heroic epic to the learned contribution of the clergy. He tries to prove that the *chansons de geste* arose along the pilgrim routes and that the minstrels who recited them to the assembled throng near the monastery churches were to some extent the mouth-pieces of the monks. To advertise their monasteries and churches, they are supposed to have attempted to spread the stories of the saints and heroes who were buried there or whose relics were preserved there, and for this purpose made use of the minstrels and their art. The monastic chronicles contained records of these historical figures and formed, according to Bédier, the only source from which the historical bases of the epics could be derived. Thus, for example, the 'Chanson de Roland' in which the monks made Charlemagne the first pilgrim to Compostella, is supposed to have arisen originally as a local legend in the monasteries on the route to Roncevaux and to have drawn its material from the historical records of these monasteries.⁷⁵

The Bédier theory has been attacked on the ground that in the 'Chanson de Roland' neither St. James nor the famous place

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of pilgrimage with his grave is mentioned amongst the many saints and Spanish cities which are referred to by name. Where is the alleged advertisement for the pilgrimage, the critics have asked, if the poet fails to mention the goal of the journey? This objection is not entirely sound, for what we possess is possibly only one version of a poem which had rapidly become universally popular and widely known and in which there was no longer any special point in mentioning the place of pilgrimage, Compostella, by name. But however that may be, in the French epics the traces of the clerical hand are as conspicuous as the accents of the minstrel are unmistakable. We see here all those forces working together which, in the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon sphere, had brought about the fall of the heroic ballad from the heights of a courtly art to the lower level of a popular art: monasticism and the art of miming, the poet and the public from the lower strata of society, the clerical interest and the taste for the pathetic and the piquant, all of which influences now come more and more into the foreground. Bédier is very well aware that the pilgrimages do not by a long way explain everything and he emphasizes the point that the crusades in East and West, the ideals and feelings of feudal society and of chivalry, are just as necessary factors for an understanding of the *chansons de geste* as the intellectual world of the monks and the emotional world of the pilgrims. They are unintelligible apart from the pilgrims and the monk, but they are also unintelligible apart from the knight and the burgher, the peasant and, more than any of these, the minstrel.⁷⁶

Now, who and what is this minstrel in reality? Where does he come from? In what respects does he differ from his predecessors? He has been described as a cross between the early medieval court-singer and the ancient mime of classical times.⁷⁷ The mime had never ceased to flourish since the days of classical antiquity; when even the last traces of classical culture disappeared, the descendants of the old mimes still continued to travel about the Empire, entertaining the masses with their unpretentious, unsophisticated and unliterary art.⁷⁸ The Germanic countries were flooded out with mimes in the early Middle Ages; but until the ninth century the poets and singers at the courts kept themselves

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strictly apart from them. Not until they lost their cultured audience, as a result of the Carolingian Renaissance and the clericalism of the following generation, and came up against the competition of the mimes in the lower classes, did they have, to a certain extent, to become mimes themselves in order to be able to compete with their rivals.⁷⁹ Thus both singers and comedians now move in the same circles, intermingle and influence each other so much that they soon become indistinguishable from one another. The mime and the *scop* both become the minstrel. The most striking characteristic of the minstrel is his versatility. The place of the cultured, highly specialized heroic ballad poet is now taken by the Jack of all trades, who is no longer merely a poet and singer, but also a musician and dancer, dramatist and actor, clown and acrobat, juggler and bear-leader, in a word, the universal jester and *maître de plaisir* of the age. Specialization, distinction and solemn dignity are now finished with; the court poet has become everybody's fool and his social degradation has such a revolutionary and shattering effect on himself that he never entirely recovers from the shock. From now on he is one of the *déclassés*, in the same class as tramps and prostitutes, runaway clerics and sent-down students, charlatans and beggars. He has been called the 'journalist of the age',⁸⁰ but he really goes in for entertainment of every kind: the dancing song as well as the satirical song, the fairy story as well as the mime, the legend of saints as well as the heroic epic. In this context, however, the epic takes on quite new features: it acquires in places a more pointed character with a new straining after effect, which was absolutely foreign to the spirit of the old heroic ballad. The minstrel no longer strikes the gloomy, solemn, tragi-heroic note of the 'Hildebrandslied', for he wants to make even the epic sound entertaining; he tries to provide sensations, effective climaxes and lively epigrams.⁸¹ Compared with the monuments of the older heroic poetry, the 'Chanson de Roland' never fails to reveal this popular minstrel taste for the piquant.

Pio Rajna mentions somewhere that he was able to reach nearly the end of his researches on the French epic without even once finding it necessary to use the word 'heroic lay'. Karl Lachmann, on the other hand, might have said that he could not have

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made a single statement of any importance about the epic without using this word. The romantics resolved the epic into the elements of the saga and the song, because they regretted the loss of the irrational forces of history in the epic of the professional poets. Our age, on the other hand, prefers to draw attention, in the epic, as in art generally, to the conscious skill and background knowledge displayed, because it understands the rational better than the emotional and the instinctive. The poems have their own legend, their own heroic history: works of poetry live not only in the form the poets give to them but also in that which they are given by posterity. Every cultural epoch has its own Homer, its own 'Nibelungenlied' and 'Chanson de Roland'. It re-composes these works by interpreting them anew from the standpoint of its own outlook on life. But these reinterpretations are better described as a gradual circling round than as a direct approaching of the works in question. The later interpretation is not necessarily the 'more accurate'; but every serious attempt to interpret a work from the point of view of a living present deepens and widens its significance. Every theory which shows us the epic from a new, historically valid standpoint is useful; for we are concerned here not so much with historical truth, with 'what really happened', as with obtaining a new, direct approach to the subject. The romantic interpretation of the heroic saga and heroic poetry made it clear that the epic poets, however original they were as artists, could by no means do entirely what they liked with their material and felt themselves much more rigidly bound by established traditional forms than the poets of a later age. Again, the song-theory made another generation aware of the cumulative composition of the epics, and, by directing attention to their source in the heroic and aristocratic prize- and war-song, made possible an understanding of their sociological constitution. Finally, the theory of the contribution of the clerics and minstrels shed new light on both the unromantically popular and on the ecclesiastical and learned elements of the genre. Only after all these interpretations had been attempted did it become possible to discover an approach from which the epic can be seen as a kind of 'hereditary poetry'⁸² midway between art poetry with its freedom of movement and folk poetry with its strong traditional ties.

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6. THE ORGANIZATION OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION IN THE MONASTERIES

After the reign of Charlemagne the court is no longer the cultural and intellectual centre of the Empire. Scholarship, art and literature are now centred in the monasteries; the most important intellectual work is done in their libraries, writing-rooms and workshops. The art of the Christian West owes its first golden age to their wealth and industry. With the increasing number of cultural centres, brought about by the development of the monasteries, a more marked differentiation of artistic activity takes place. We must not, however, think of these monasteries as completely isolated from one another; as a result of their common dependence on Rome, the universal influence of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks, and later through the reformist congregations, they are all connected with one another though not very closely.⁸³ Bédier has already drawn attention to their points of contact with the lay world, their function in relation to pilgrimages and their rôle as meeting-places for pilgrims, merchants and minstrels. But in spite of these external connections, the monasteries remain fundamentally self-sufficient, self-centred unities, holding fast to their traditions longer and more uncompromisingly than the earlier more fickle courts or later bourgeois society.

The Benedictine rule had prescribed manual as well as intellectual work and even attached greater importance to manual occupations. The monastic estates, like the manor-houses, aspired to become economically as independent as possible and to produce all the necessities of life on their own land. The activity of the monks included work in the fields and gardens as well as handicrafts generally. It is true that even from the very beginning the heaviest physical toil was performed by the free peasants and by serfs attached to the monasteries and later on, apart from the peasants, by lay brothers, but especially in the early period, most of the manual crafts were carried on by the monks themselves; and precisely through its organization of handicraft work, monasticism had the deepest influence on the development of art and culture in the Middle Ages. That the production of art proceeded within the framework of well-ordered, more or less rationally

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organized workshops with a proper division of labour, and that members of the upper classes could be enlisted for this work, is the merit and achievement of the monastic movement. It is known that aristocrats were in a majority in the early medieval monasteries; certain monasteries were in fact almost exclusively reserved for them.⁸⁴ Thus people who could otherwise probably never have handled a smeary paint-brush, a chisel or a trowel came into direct touch with arts and crafts. It is true that the contempt for manual labour still remains widespread even in the Middle Ages, and the idea of power still continues to be associated with that of an idle existence, but it is unmistakably evident that now, in contrast to classical antiquity, alongside the life of the seigneur, which is associated with unlimited leisure, the industrious life acquires a more positive evaluation and this new relationship to work is connected, amongst other things, with the popularity of monastic life. Even in the bourgeois evaluation of labour of the later Middle Ages, as expressed, for instance, in the regulations of the guilds, the spirit of the monastic rule still lives on. One must not forget, however, that in the monasteries work continues to be regarded partly as a penance and a punishment,⁸⁵ and that even St. Thomas still speaks of 'viles artifices' (*Comm. in polit.*, 3.1.4.). For the present there can, therefore, be no question of labour being an ennoblement of life.

Western Europe first learnt to work methodically from the monks; the industry of the Middle Ages is very largely their creation. The artisans, who, as the heirs of the old Roman craftsmen, were still plentiful enough in the towns,⁸⁶ worked within very modest limits until the revival of urban economy and contributed little to the development of industrial techniques. There were certainly specialist craftsmen on the royal palatinates and the bigger estates, where compulsory unpaid labour was used, but they were regarded as part of the royal household and domestic staff and their work was still in the nature of purely domestic labour governed more by custom than by practical considerations. The separation of manual crafts from the domestic setting first takes place in the monasteries. Here time is carefully husbanded, the day is divided rationally and the passing of the hours is measured and proclaimed by the striking of a bell.⁸⁷ The principle

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of the division of labour becomes the basis of production and is practised not only within but also to some extent between the different monasteries.

Outside the monasteries the applied arts were cultivated only on the royal domains and the biggest estates and even there only in the simplest of forms. But it was precisely in this field that the monasteries excelled. The copying and illustrating of manuscripts was one of their oldest titles to fame.⁸⁸ The establishment of libraries and writing-rooms, which Cassiodorus had begun in Vivarium, was imitated by most of the Benedictine monasteries. The writers and book-illustrators of Tours, Fleury, Corbie, Treves, Cologne, Ratisbon, Reichenau, St. Albans and Winchester were already renowned in the early Middle Ages. In the Benedictine foundations, the scriptoria were big, communal work-rooms, and in the other orders, the Cistercians and Carthusians, for example, smaller cells. Large-scale manufacture and small-scale, individual undertakings must have existed side by side. The work of the copyists and illuminators was, moreover, apparently sub-divided. A distinction was made, apart from the painters (*miniatores*), between the masters skilled in calligraphy (*antiquarii*), the assistants (*scriptores*) and the painters of initials (*rubricatores*). Besides the monks, the scriptoria also employed hired writers, i.e. laymen who worked partly in their own homes, partly in the monasteries. Apart from book-illustration, the monastic art par excellence, the monks also engaged in architecture, sculpture and painting, were active as goldsmiths and enamel-workers, practised silk- and carpet-weaving, started bell-foundries and book-binding workshops, glass factories and ceramic workshops. Certain monasteries developed into real centres of industry; and whereas Corbie at first occupied only four main workshops with twenty-nine workmen, as early as the ninth century, we find in St. Riquier whole rows of streets filled with the workshops of the armourers, saddlers, bookbinders, cobblers, etc., grouped according to the type of trade.⁸⁹

Not only in agriculture, which makes excessive demands on physical strength and in which the monks, with their increasing wealth, were engaged more and more as landowners and administrators and less and less as labourers, but also in the other

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branches of production the monks did only a part of the manual labour and devoted themselves more to organizing the work. They even occupied themselves much less with the copying of manuscripts than is generally supposed, and, to judge from the increase in the number of libraries, not more than a fiftieth part of the working hours of all the monks in a monastery was normally spent on the copying of manuscripts.⁹⁰ In the departments which required more physical effort, above all in the building trade, lay brothers and outside workers will have been employed in greater numbers but not so much in the minor arts. Nevertheless, in view of the constant demand of churches and courts for such craft products, it may be assumed that the monasteries were always ready to engage efficient workers and artists in this sphere of their work as well. For apart from the monks and the free or tied workers of the manors, there were also from the very outset manual workers and artists who formed the elements of a free, though small labour market. They were the travelling journeymen who found employment, sometimes in the monasteries, sometimes in the bishops' palaces and the manor-houses, and of whom there is evidence that they were regularly employed by the monks. Thus it is on record, for example, that the abbey of St. Gall and the monastery of St. Emmeran in Ratisbon enlisted many such travelling workmen to make reliquaries. It was a general practice to employ master-builders, as well as stone-, wood- and metal-workers from far and near, especially from Byzantium and Italy, to help with the building of big churches.⁹¹ On the other hand, if the information about the strictly guarded 'secret processes' of the monasteries is based on fact, the employment of such foreign labour will have in some cases been hedged around with difficulties. Whether such secrets existed or not, the monastic workshops were by no means occupied only with the production of articles but were also very often engaged in technological research. The Benedictine monk Theophilus was able, in his *Schedula diversarum artium*, at the end of the eleventh century, to describe a whole series of inventions made in the monasteries, such as the production of glass, the burning of glass paintings for windows, the mixing of oil-colours etc.⁹²

The travelling workers and artists were also trained for the

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most part in the monastic workshops which were at the same time the 'art-schools' of the age and made the training of young artists their special concern.⁹³ In many monasteries, as for example in Fulda and Hildesheim, handicraft workshops were set up which served primarily educational purposes and guaranteed the monasteries and cathedrals as well as the secular manorial estates and courts with a constant supply of young artists.⁹⁴ The monastery of Solignac, which was founded by St. Eligius, the most famous goldsmith of the seventh century, achieved a particularly high standard in its educational work. Another prince of the Church who is said to have given great service to art as a teacher was Bishop Bernward, the high-minded patron of architecture and brass-founding and the creator of the bronze doors of Hildesheim Cathedral. We often know merely the names of the other less highly placed clerical artists, but nothing of the part they played in medieval art. It is true that in the case of the monk 'Tuotilo' what was known about him became consolidated into a full-size legend, but, as has been said, this is a mere personification of the artistic activities of St. Gall and is simply the medieval counterpart of the Greek legend of Daedalus.⁹⁵

The monastic contribution to the development of church architecture is very important. Until the growth of the towns and the advent of the medieval cathedral workshop, church architecture is concentrated almost entirely in the hands of the clergy, although we must think of the artists and craftsmen employed in building churches only in part as actual monks themselves. But the directors of most of the building enterprises, including the most important, were religious; they seem, however, to have been more the supervisors than the architects.⁹⁶ Incidentally, the building activities of the individual monasteries were too discontinuous for monks, tied to definite foundations, to choose architecture as a full-time profession. Probably only the unattached, mobile laymen could do that. Of course, there are exceptions to be noted. For example, we know that the monk Hilduard was the 'maître de l'œuvre' of the Abbey church of Saint-Père in Chartres. We also know that St. Bernard of Clairveaux placed a brother of his order, the architect Achard, at the disposal of other monasteries and that Isembert, the 'maître de

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l'œuvre' of the cathedral of Saintes, built bridges in La Rochelle and England as well as in Saintes itself.⁹⁷ However many similar cases there may have been, the minor arts which were associated with less physical exertion were more in accordance with the spirit of the normal monastic workshop than the more monumental forms of art.

The over-estimation of the part played by monasticism in the history of art originates in the romantic period and is part of that legend of the Middle Ages, the survival of which often still makes it difficult for us today to approach the historical facts without prejudice. The rise of the great medieval churches was romanticized in the same way as that of the heroic epics. The principles of that organic, plant-like growth that was stressed in folk poetry were also applied to the churches and all specific planning and consistent direction of the work were contested; the existence of an architect to whom these buildings could be ascribed was denied in the same way as that of the individual poet was denied in the composition of the epics. In other words, the intention was to ascribe the decisive rôle in the arts not to the painstaking and trained artist but to the artisan whose work was done not with conscious thought but simply in accordance with tradition. The anonymity of the artist was also a part of the romantic legend of the Middle Ages. In its ambivalent relationship to modern individualism, the romantic movement represented anonymous creativity as a special mark of greatness and dwelt with particular affection on the picture of the unknown monk creating his work solely for the honour of God, hidden away in the darkness of his cell and in no way obtruding his own personality. But, unfortunately for this romantic theory, in the cases where the names of the artists have come down to us from medieval times, they are nearly always those of monks, and the naming of the artists stops at the very moment that artistic activities pass out of the hands of the clergy into those of the laity. The explanation is simple: whether the name of the artist was to be allowed to appear on a work of ecclesiastical art was decided by religious and they naturally gave pride of place to their own professional brethren. But even the chroniclers, who were in the habit of recording such names and who were themselves exclusively

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monks, had an interest in the particular mention of an artist only if he was a fellow-monk. In contrast to classical antiquity or the Renaissance, the impersonality of the work of art and the unobtrusiveness of the artists are beyond doubt. For even when the name of an artist is mentioned and the artist expresses a personal ambition in his work, the idea of individual particularity remains foreign to him and his contemporaries. But all the same, it is a romantic exaggeration to speak of a fundamental anonymity in medieval art. In miniature painting there are countless examples of signed works and at every stage of its development.⁹⁸ In connection with the architectural monuments of the Middle Ages it has been possible, in spite of the large number of works destroyed and documents lost, to establish the names of 25,000 artists.⁹⁹ One must not forget, however, that often where, in the medieval style, the predicate 'fecit' is added to a name in an inscription, it is the person who commissioned the work that is meant and not the artist who did the work, and that the bishops, abbots and other clerical gentlemen, to whom the buildings were ascribed in this way, were in most cases merely the 'chairmen of the building committee' and neither the actual architects nor the supervisors of building operations.¹⁰⁰

Whatever part the clergy played in the building of their churches and however the work was divided between monks and laity, somewhere there must have been a limit to the divisibility of functions. Cathedral chapters and abbatial building committees may have made corporate decisions on the ultimate fate of building plans and the artistic problems may have been solved, as a whole, in mutual consultation by a collective body, but the individual steps in the creative process can have been carried out only by individual artists consciously pursuing aims of their own. Such a complicated structure as a medieval church could not arise like a folk song, the creation of which starts, in the final analysis, in the mind of a single unknown individual but which, as opposed to a building, grows without a plan by constant accretions from outside. It is not the idea that a work of art is the shared creation of several personalities that is romantic and scientifically unverifiable, for even the work of the single artist is made up of the contributions of several partly autonomous intellectual faculties,

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the union of which is often a delayed and purely external operation. But the idea that a work of art is absolutely and entirely the creation of a group and that it needs no uniform and deliberate plan, however subject to modification, is naïve and romantic.

7. FEUDALISM AND THE ROMANESQUE STYLE

Romanesque art was a monastic art, but at the same time an art of the aristocracy. The combination of these qualities best shows how great was the solidarity between the clergy and the secular nobility. The most important posts in the medieval Church were reserved, like high-priestly office in ancient Rome, for members of the aristocracy;¹⁰¹ the abbots and bishops were connected, however, with the feudal system not only by their noble birth but also by their economic and political interests. They owed their property and their power to the same social order in which the privileges of the secular nobility were rooted. There existed between the two aristocracies, if not always an explicit, at least a trustworthy alliance. The monastic orders, whose abbots had enormous wealth and legions of subordinates at their disposal, and from whose ranks the most powerful Popes, the most influential advisers and the most dangerous rivals of the Emperors emerged, kept themselves as sublimely aloof from the masses as did the secular lords. A change in their seignorial attitude to the common people first occurs with the ascetic reform movement which began in Cluny, but there can be no question of a change in the direction of a more democratic outlook until after the foundation of the mendicant orders. Set in the midst of their widespread properties, overlooking the slopes of mountains, with views reaching deep down into the countryside, with their steep, massive, bulwark-like walls, the monasteries were just as lordly and unapproachable domains as the forts and castles of the princes and barons—nothing is more understandable than that the art which was created in these monasteries was also in accordance with the character and outlook of the secular aristocracy.

The aristocracy which develops out of the Frankish army and officialdom, and is completely feudalized by the end of the ninth

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century, now places itself at the head of society and becomes the real holder of supreme power. Out of the former nobility based on military service there had developed a powerful, proud and rebellious hereditary nobility in whom the memory of its descent from a professional class had long since faded, entirely disappeared in fact, and whose privileges now seemed to have existed from time immemorial. The relationship between the kings and this aristocracy became completely inverted in the course of time; originally the crown was hereditary and the sovereign could choose his advisers and officials as he liked, now the privileges of the aristocracy were hereditary and the kings elected.¹⁰² The Germano-Romanic states of the early Middle Ages faced difficulties which had been felt as early as the later classical age, when the attempt had been made to overcome them by institutions such as the colonate, the introduction of taxation in kind and making the landowners responsible for the state revenue, that is to say, by a system similar to medieval feudalism. The lack of sufficient funds for the upkeep of an adequate administrative service and a suitable army, the difficulty of defending extensive territories against the danger of invasion, had existed since the late Roman period and new difficulties arose in the Middle Ages because of the lack of trained civil servants, the increased and prolonged danger of hostile attacks, and the necessity of introducing armoured cavalry above all against the Arabs, a reform which, owing to the costly equipment and relatively long period of training required, constituted an intolerable burden on the state. Feudalism is the institution by which the ninth century tried to overcome these difficulties, especially that presented by the creation of a mounted and heavily armoured army. For want of other means, military service was recompensed by the granting of landed property, exemptions and seigniorial rights and, particularly, by special taxation and legal privileges; and these formed the basis of the new system. Benefices, i.e. occasional gifts of landed property from the royal domains as a reward for services rendered or the granting of the usufruct of such land as payment for regular official and military services, were already in existence in the Merovingian age. The feudal character of the grants and the vassalage of those invested,

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in other words, the contractual relationship and the loyal alliance, the system of mutual service and obligation, the principle of mutual fidelity and personal loyalty, which now takes the place of the old system of subordination—all this is new. Feudal tenure, at first merely a usufruct granted for a limited period, became by the ninth century hereditary.

The creation of the feudal cavalry with hereditary tenure as the basis of the service relationship is one of the most revolutionary military innovations in the history of Western Europe: it transforms an organ of the central government into an almost unlimited power in the state and brings the absolute kingship of the Middle Ages to an end. From now on, the king has only so much power as is due to him on the basis of his private estates and only so much authority as he would have even if he held his property as a mere fief. There is no longer any state in our sense in the immediately succeeding epoch, no homogeneous administration, no civic solidarity, no universal, formally legal obligations.¹⁰³ The feudal state is a social pyramid with an abstract point as its apex. The king wages wars but does not rule; the great landowners rule, and no longer as officials and mercenaries, favourites and upstarts, beneficiaries and prebendaries, but as independent territorial lords, whose privileges are based not on an official authority derived from the sovereign as the source of law, but purely and simply on their actual, direct personal power. They constitute a master class claiming for itself all the prerogatives of government, the whole administrative machine, all important positions in the army and all the higher posts in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which thereby attains an influence in the state such as probably no social class had ever possessed before. Even the Greek aristocracy in its prime secured less personal freedom for its members than the weakened royalty of the early Middle Ages had to grant to the feudal lords. The centuries dominated by this aristocracy have rightly been described as *the* aristocratic epoch in European history;¹⁰⁴ in no other phase of Western European development were cultural forms so exclusively dependent on the philosophy, social ideals and economic policy of a single, numerically rather weak class.

The feudal system is, in the moneyless and tradeless period

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of the early Middle Ages, in which landed property is the only source of income and the only form of wealth, the ready-made solution of the problems arising from the administration and defence of the country. The ruralization of culture, which had already begun in late classical times, is now complete: the economy is wholly agrarian and life has become absolutely rural. The towns have lost their powers of attraction, the existence of the overwhelming majority of the population is limited to small, scattered, isolated settlements. Social life, trade and intercourse had died out in the towns; life had taken on more simple, more regionally localized forms. The economic and social unity, on the basis of which everything is now organized, is the manor; men have forgotten how to move in wider circles and to think in more comprehensive categories. As money and means of communication, cities and markets are mostly lacking, people are forced to make themselves independent of the outside world, and to forgo both the acquisition of others' products and the sale of their own. Thus a situation develops in which there is almost no incentive to produce goods in excess of one's own needs. Karl Buecher has described this system by the well-known term of a 'closed household economy' and has called it a perfect system of money- and barter-free autarchy.¹⁰⁵ As we now know, his extreme view of the situation is not wholly in accordance with the facts; the hypothesis of an absolutely self-sufficient household economy in the Middle Ages has proved to be untenable,¹⁰⁶ and the suggestion that we should speak rather of an 'economy without outlets' than of a 'barterless natural economy' supplies the necessary corrective.¹⁰⁷ But Buecher merely overstated the case for the existence of the independent estate economy in the Middle Ages, he certainly did not invent it; since no one will deny that there is in fact a tendency to autarchy in the feudal period. The general rule is to consume goods in the household where they are produced, despite the many exceptions and the fact that the buying and selling of goods never stops completely. The distinction between the early medieval production for home consumption and the later production of commodities, already suggested by Marx, is, in any case, a necessary one, and the category of the 'closed household economy' proves to be almost indispensable for the

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characterization of the feudal economic system, provided one takes it as an 'ideal type' rather than as a concrete reality.

The most peculiar characteristic of early medieval economy, and, at the same time, the feature by which it exerts its deepest influence on the intellectual culture of the period, is undoubtedly the fact that all inducement to overproduce is lacking and that traditional methods continue to be used and the old rhythm of production observed without any concern for technical inventions and organizational improvements. It is, as has been said,¹⁰⁸ a pure 'outgoing economy', producing only so much as it consumes, in which all idea of profitability, all sense of calculation and speculation, all conception of the planned and rational employment of the forces available, is lacking. The immobility of the forms of society and the rigidity of the barriers separating the various classes is in perfect accordance with the traditionalism and irrationalism of its economy. The classes which make up the society are regarded not only as having their own intrinsic significance but as ordained by God, that is to say, it is almost impossible to rise from one class into another; any attempt to disregard the frontiers between them is equivalent to rebellion against the Divine will for man. In such an inflexible, immobile system of society, the idea of intellectual competition, the ambition to develop and assert one's own individuality, could no more come to the surface than could the principle of commercial competition in an economy without markets, without reward for extra production and without prospect of profit. In conformity with the undynamic spirit of the economy and the static structure of society, a stern, immovable, diehard conservatism also reigns supreme in the scholarship, art and literature of the period. The same inflexibility which binds the economy and society itself to tradition also retards the development of new thought in science and scholarship and delays new modes of experience in art. It introduces that stabilizing and almost stodgy trend into the development of Romanesque art which prevents any deeper change of style occurring for nearly two centuries. Just as the spirit of rationalism, the understanding of exact methods of production and the ability to speculate in figures is absolutely lacking in economic life, and just as on the whole

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people have no feeling for figures, for precise timing and quantitative evaluations in everyday life, so the age lacks all the categories of thought based on the concepts of commodity, money and profit. In a word, it lacks the intellectual dynamism induced by the competitive idea. That a pre-individualistic frame of mind is in accordance with a pre-capitalistic and pre-rationalistic economy is all the more easily explained as individualism already contains within itself the principle of competition.

The idea of progress is completely unknown to the early Middle Ages; it has no understanding of the value of what is new, it strives rather to preserve what is old and traditional. And it is not merely the idea of progress as held by modern science which is foreign to its way of thinking;¹⁰⁰ in the comprehension of familiar truths guaranteed by authority, the age is much less concerned with originality of interpretation than with the confirmation and corroboration of the truths themselves. It regards the rediscovery of what has already been established, the reforming of what has already been formed and the reinterpretation of truth as pointless and meaningless. The supreme values are beyond question and contained in eternally valid forms; the desire to change them, merely for the sake of changing them, would be pure presumption. The purpose of life is possession of the eternal values, not mental activity for its own sake. This is a calm, firmly established age, strong in faith, never losing its confidence in the validity of its own conception of truth and moral law, having no intellectual dissension and no conflicts of conscience, feeling no yearning for the new and no boredom with the old. At any rate, it does not lend any support to such ideas and feelings.

The early medieval Church, which enjoyed the authority of the ruling class in all intellectual matters and acted as its mandatary, nipped in the bud any doubts in the absolute validity of the commands and doctrines that flow from the idea of the divinely willed nature of this world and that guarantee the authority of the established order. The culture within which every province of life stood in direct relationship to the faith and to the truths of the Gospel entailed the dependence of the whole intellectual life of society, of all its science and art, of its whole thinking and

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willing, on the authority of the Church. The metaphysical-religious conception of the world, according to which all earthly things are related to the world to come and all human beings to the Divine Being and everything is the expression of a transcendent purpose and Divine intention, was used by the Church above all to create an absolutely unrivalled position for the theocracy based on the sacramental priesthood. From the primacy of faith over knowledge the Church derived the right authoritatively and unchallengeably to establish the guiding principles and the frontiers of culture. Such a homogeneous and self-contained outlook on life as that of the early Middle Ages could develop and assert itself only in the form of an entirely 'authoritarian and coercive culture',¹¹⁰ and only under the pressure of sanctions such as those the Church was able to impose, being in exclusive possession of the instruments of salvation. The strict limitations which feudalism with the aid of the Church imposed on the thinking and feeling of the time explain the absolutism of the metaphysical system, which was as ruthless towards all idiosyncrasies in the field of philosophy as the social system was to all individual freedoms and which made the same principles of authority and hierarchy supreme in the intellectual and spiritual spheres as were inherent in the sociological structure of the age.

All the same, the absolutist cultural programme of the Church is not completely realized until after the end of the tenth century when, under the influence of the Cluniac movement, a new spirituality and a new intellectual intransigence make themselves felt. In pursuit of their totalitarian aims, the clergy now produce an apocalyptic mood of escapism from the world and a yearning for death; they hold men's minds in a state of constant religious excitement, preaching about the end of the world and the Last Judgement, organizing pilgrimages and crusades and excommunicating emperors and kings. In this authoritarian and militant spirit the Church achieves the final consolidation of medieval culture, which now appears for the first time, at the turn of the millennium, in its full unity and individuality.¹¹¹ Now the first great Romanesque churches arise, the first important creations of medieval art in the narrower sense of the word. The eleventh century is a brilliant period in the history of church architecture,

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just as it is the golden age of scholastic philosophy and, in France, of ecclesiastically inspired heroic poetry. This whole intellectual flowering, above all the rise of architecture to its heights of achievement, would be inconceivable without the enormous growth of Church property which now takes place. The age of monastic reforms is also an age of great benefactions and endowments for the monasteries.¹¹² Not only the wealth of the monastic orders increases, however, but also that of the bishoprics, especially in Germany, where the kings seek to gain for themselves allies against rebellious vassals in the leaders of the Church. Thanks to their donations, the first great cathedrals now arise alongside the great monastic churches. As is known, the kings have no permanent residence during this period, but take up their quarters with their courts now in a bishop's palace, now in an abbey.¹¹³ Owing to the lack of a capital and a residence, they also carry on no building activity on their own account, but are content merely to give their support to the enterprises initiated by the bishops. Therefore, the great episcopal churches of this period in Germany are rightly considered and described as the 'Emperors' minsters.

These Romanesque churches are, in accordance with the influential position of their builders, imposing expressions of unrestricted power and unlimited resources. They have been called 'fortresses of God' and they are, in fact, as large, solid and massive as the strongholds and castles of the period—far too large in relation to the size of the congregations. But they were erected not merely to serve the faithful but to the greater glory of God and, like the sacred buildings of the Ancient Orient and unlike any architecture of later ages to the same extent, they served as symbols of supreme power and authority. It is true that the dimensions of the Hagia Sophia were equally enormous, but there was some practical reason for its hugeness since it was the principal church of a metropolis, whereas the Romanesque churches were built at best in quiet and secluded little towns—inevitably, for there were no longer any big towns in the West.

It would be very natural to connect not merely the proportions but also the heavy, broad, weighty forms of Romanesque architecture with the powerful social position of the builders, and

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to consider them the expression of an inflexible sense of class-supremacy. But it would not explain anything, it would merely confuse the issue. To understand the voluminous and oppressive calm and gravity of Romanesque art, one must appreciate its 'archaism', its return to simple, stylized geometric forms, and these are due to easily intelligible circumstances. The art of the Romanesque period is more simple and homogeneous, less eclectic and differentiated than the art of the Byzantine or Carolingian epoch, because it is no longer a court art and because the cities of the West suffered a further setback after the age of Charlemagne, above all as a result of the penetration of the Arabs into the Mediterranean area and the interruption of trade relationships between East and West. In other words: the creation of art is now no longer subject to the refined and fickle taste of the court nor to the intellectual restlessness of the towns. It is in some ways coarser and more primitive than the art of the immediately preceding period, but it drags along with it much less undigested and unassimilated material than Byzantine and especially Carolingian art. It no longer speaks the language of a more or less imitative culture but that of a religious renewal.

This is once again a religiously inspired art in which the spiritual and secular elements are more or less fused into a single whole, and in which those who experience it at first hand are not always aware of the distinction between the ecclesiastical and secular purposes behind it. At any rate, they feel the gulf dividing the two spheres less acutely than we do, although there can be no longer any question in this comparatively late period of such an absolute synthesis of art, life and religion as the romantics envisaged. For although the Christian Middle Ages were much more deeply and ingenuously religious than classical antiquity, the connection between religious and social life was closer in Greek and Roman times than in the Middle Ages. At least, classical antiquity was nearer in spirit to primitive times to the extent that the state, the tribe and the family were still regarded not merely as social groups but as religious units and religious realities. The Christians of the Middle Ages, on the other hand, separated the natural forms of society from supernatural relationships.¹¹⁴ The subsequent combination of the two orders in the

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idea of the *civitas dei* was never complete enough for political groupings and blood relationships to acquire a religious character in the popular mind.

The religious nature of Romanesque art did not, therefore, result from the circumstance that all the expressions of the life of the time were conditioned by religion, for that was in fact by no means the case, but rather from the situation which had developed after the dissolution of court society, municipal administration and central government, and in which the Church had become practically the only source of commissions for works of art. In addition to that, as a result of the absolute clericalization of culture, art was no longer regarded as an object of aesthetic enjoyment but as an 'extension of divine service, as a votive offering and a sacrificial gift'.¹¹⁵ From this point of view, the Middle Ages stood nearer to the conditions of primitive society than did classical antiquity. But that is not to say that the artistic language of the Romanesque was in any way more intelligible to the broad masses of the people than that of the classical age or of the early Middle Ages. If the art of the Carolingian period was dependent on the taste of a cultured court society, and was, as such, foreign to the common people, art is now the exclusive possession of a clerical élite which, even though it is broader-based than the court society of Charlemagne, does not even include the whole of the clergy. If, therefore, medieval art was a vehicle for ecclesiastical propaganda, its task could only be to put the masses of the people into a solemn but on the whole somewhat vague and indefinite religious frame of mind. The often far-fetched symbolism and sophisticated expression of the works of art depicting religious subjects were certainly often not understood and appreciated by simple Christian believers. Because the forms of the Romanesque style were more concise and less differentiated than those of earlier Christian art, they were not, therefore, by any means more in accordance with simple and popular taste.

With the rhythmic alternation of styles a new phase of abstract, rigid formalism is attained in Romanesque art—after the geometrism of early and the naturalism of later classical times, the abstraction of the early Christian and the eclecticism of the Carolingian age. Feudal culture, which is essentially anti-indivi-

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dualistic, favours the general and the homogeneous in art as in other fields, and strives for a representation of the world in which everything is stereotyped, the physiognomies as well as the draperies, the large gesticulating hands as well as the small trees shaped like palm branches and the mountains stiff and sharp like tin. Both this stereotyped formalism and the monumentality of Romanesque art are best expressed in the emphasis on cubic forms and their adaptation to architecture. The sculptural works in the Romanesque churches are, as it were, mere pillars and columns, parts of the architectonic design. Not only the animals and the foliage but also the human figures fulfil an ornamental function in the total pattern of the church; according to the space to be filled up, they are bent and twisted, stretched or reduced in size. The subservient rôle of the detail is emphasized so strongly that the frontier between free and applied art, between sculpture and mere decoration, remains entirely fluid.¹¹⁸ Here too the idea of correspondence with the authoritarian form of government is a very tempting one. The simplest explanation would be to connect the functional relationship of the various elements in a Romanesque building, and their subordination to the architectonic unity of the whole, with the authoritarianism of the age, and to attribute it to the principle of amalgamation, which dominates the social patterns and is expressed in collective structures such as the universal Church and monasticism, the feudal system and the 'closed household'. But such an interpretation would be rather misleading. The sculptural work in a Romanesque church is 'dependent' on the architectural design in quite a different sense from that in which peasants and vassals are dependent on their feudal lords.

Strict formalism and abstraction from reality are undoubtedly the most important, but by no means the only characteristics of the Romanesque style. For just as a mystic tendency is at work alongside the scholastic trend in the philosophy of the age, and a wild, unrestrained ecstatic religiosity finds expression in the monastic reform movement alongside a strict dogmatism, so also in art emotional and expressionistic tendencies make themselves felt alongside the dominant formalism and stereotyped abstractionism. This less restrained conception of art is not perceptible,

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however, until the second half of the Romanesque period, that is to say, it coincides with the revival of trade and urban life in the eleventh century.¹¹⁷ However modest these beginnings are in themselves, they represent the first signs of a change which paves the way for the individualism and liberalism of the modern age. Externally nothing much is altered for the present; the basic tendency of Romanesque art remains anti-naturalistic and hieratic. And yet, if a first step towards the dissolution of the ties which restrict medieval life is to be discerned anywhere, then it is here, in this astonishingly prolific eleventh century, with its new towns and markets, its new orders and schools, the first crusade and the founding of the first Norman states, the beginnings of monumental Christian sculpture and the proto-forms of Gothic architecture. It cannot be a coincidence that all this new life and movement occurs at the same time as the early medieval self-supporting economy is beginning to yield to a mercantile economy after centuries of uninterrupted stagnation.

In art the change takes place very slowly. It is true that figure sculpture by itself represents a new art, forgotten since the end of the classical age, but its formal idiom remains fundamentally tied to the conventions of the earlier Romanesque school of painting; and as for the proto-Gothic style of the Norman churches of the eleventh century, it is correct to consider it still as a form of Romanesque. The vertical dissolution of the wall and the expressionism of the figures show unmistakable signs, however, of a tendency to a more dynamic outlook. In the overstatements by which effects are now obtained—the displacement of natural proportions, the excessive enlargements of the expressive parts of the face and body, especially of the eyes and hands, the exaggeration of gesture, the ostentatiously deep bows, arms flung upwards, legs crossed in dancing fashion—it is no longer only a question of that phenomenon which, as has been asserted, is present in all primitive art, and merely consists in the ‘parts of the body, the movement of which most clearly indicates volition and emotion, being formed in greater size and strength’.¹¹⁸ We are dealing here with a definite tendency to expressionism.¹¹⁹ The impetuosity with which art now applies itself to this mode of representation is inspired by the spiritual fervour and activism of the Cluniac

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movement. The dynamic force of 'late Romanesque baroque' bears the same relationship to Cluny and the monastic reform movement as the solemn and passionate style of the seventeenth century does to the Jesuits and the Counter Reformation. In sculpture as in painting, in the sculpture of Autun and Vézelay, Moissac and Souillac as in the Evangelists of the Gospel-Books of Amiens and of Otto III, the same asceticism and the same apocalyptic Last Judgement atmosphere are expressed. The slender, fragile figures of the prophets and apostles, consumed by the fire of their faith, which surround Christ on the tympana of churches, the redeemed and blessed ones, the angels and saints of the Last Judgements and Ascensions, are all spiritualized ascetics, imagined, by the pious monks who created this art, as models of perfection.

Even the narrative and scenic representations of later Romanesque art are often the products of a wild, fantastic dream-vision, but in the ornamental compositions, as, for example, in the 'trumeau' of the Benedictine Abbey of Souillac, the fantastic element is worked up into the abstruseness of a delirium. Men, animals, fabulous creatures and monsters are all united in a single stream of rampant life, a chaotic swarming of intertwined bodies which is reminiscent in some respects of the maze of lines in the Irish miniatures and shows that the tradition of this old art is still alive, but it also shows all the changes that have taken place since its golden age and how the rigid geometrism of the early Middle Ages was made fluid by the dynamism of the eleventh century. What we understand by Christian and medieval art is now fully realized for the first time, and the transcendental meaning of the pictures and sculptures completely revealed. Phenomena like the excessive length or convulsive gestures of the figures can no longer be explained on rational grounds, in contrast to the unnatural proportions of early Christian art, which flowed with a certain logic from the hierarchy of the figures represented. In Christian antiquity nature was deformed by the emergence of a transcendent world, but the validity of natural laws remained fundamentally inviolate; here, on the other hand, these laws are completely annulled and with them the predominance of classical conceptions of beauty is also broken. In early Christian art the

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deviations from natural reality still moved within the limits of the biologically possible and the formally correct: but now these deviations have become quite irreconcilable with the classical criteria of truth and beauty, and in the end, 'all the intrinsic and specific values of sculptural figures as sculpture came to an end'.¹²⁰ The reference to the transcendent is now so predominant that the individual forms no longer have any inherent value of their own; they are now pure symbols and signs. They express the transcendent world no longer merely in negative terms, that is to say, they not only hint at the reality of the supernatural by leaving gaps in the concatenation of the natural and by denying the independent character of the purely natural order; they now depict the irrational and the supramundane in a thoroughly positive and direct manner. If one compares the bodiless, ecstatically convulsed figures of this art with the robust and handsome figures of classical art, in the way that the relief of St. Peter in Moissac has been compared with the 'Doryphoros',¹²¹ then the real nature of the medieval conception of art becomes clearly apparent. Compared with the art of classical antiquity, which is restricted to what is physically beautiful and which avoids in general all reference to psychological and intellectual characteristics, the Romanesque style appears as an art concerned solely with the expression of the spiritual, the laws of which conform not to the logic of sense experience, but to that of the inner vision. The special character of late Romanesque art is to be found in this visionary quality and here is to be found the explanation of the shadowy lengths, the forced poses, the marionette-like motions of its figures.

The delight of Romanesque art in pictorial illustration grows steadily; in the end it is just as strong as its interest in the decorative. The intellectual restlessness of later Romanesque art is expressed, among other things, in the constant widening of the field covered by pictorial representation, which leads to the conquest for artistic purposes of the whole range of Holy Scripture. The new subjects, particularly the Last Judgement and the Passion, are just as typical of the age as the style in which they are treated. The main theme of late Romanesque sculpture is the Last Judgement. It is a favourite subject for the tympana of

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church portals. A product of the millenarian psychosis, it is at the same time the strongest expression of the authority of the Church. The whole of humanity is brought to judgement, and either condemned or acquitted according as to whether the Church is pleading for the prosecution or the defence. To intimidate men's minds, art could have devised no more effective method than this picture of endless terror and eternal bliss. The popularity of the other great theme of Romanesque art, the Passion, is due to a new emotional tendency, although the treatment is in most cases still confined within the frontiers of the old, unemotional, solemnly ceremonial style. It stands, anyhow, midway between the earlier aversion from the representation of the suffering, mortified God and the later morbid revelling in the Saviour's wounds. For the early Christian, educated in the spirit of classical antiquity, there was always something embarrassing about the idea of the Redeemer dying on a criminal's cross. Carolingian art accepts the Oriental image of the crucifixion, but still fights against showing a tortured and humiliated Christ. Divine sublimity and physical agony are incompatible in the mind of the ruling class. Even in the Romanesque representations of the Passion, the crucified Christ does not normally hang from but stands on the cross and is usually shown with his eyes open, quite often wearing a crown and clothed.¹²² The aristocratic society of this time had first to overcome its distaste for the representation of the naked body, a distaste influenced by social as well as religious considerations, before it could accustom itself to the sight of a naked Christ. But medieval art continues to avoid showing naked bodies where the subject does not make it absolutely necessary.¹²³ Corresponding to the heroic, royal Christ who still appears as the victor over the earthly, mortal things, even as he hangs from the cross, we have, of course, a picture of the Madonna which, instead of showing her with all her love and sorrow, as we have been accustomed to seeing her since the Gothic period, shows her as a heavenly Queen exalted above all human cares.

The delight with which later Romanesque art can become engrossed in the illustration of an epic theme is shown most directly in the Bayeux Tapestry, a work which, in spite of being designed for a church, expresses an outlook different from

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that of ecclesiastical art. It tells the story of the Norman conquest of England in a remarkably fluent style, with many varied episodes and with a striking love for realistic detail. A diffuse way of presentation here makes its mark, anticipating the cyclic compositions of Gothic art and sharply opposed to the principles of unity which govern the Romanesque conception in general. Obviously, this is not a work of monastic art but rather the product of a workshop which was to some extent independent of the Church. The tradition that ascribes the embroidery to Queen Mathilda is no doubt based on a legend, for the work was clearly done by experienced, professionally trained artists; but the legend, at any rate, points to the secular origin of the work. No other monument of Romanesque art gives us such a comprehensive idea of the means which the secular art of this age must have had at its disposal. It makes the loss of similar works, on the preservation of which obviously less care was expended than on that of ecclesiastical art, doubly regrettable. We do not know how extensive the production of secular art was; it will not have even approached the output of ecclesiastical art, but it was, at least in the late Romanesque period to which the Bayeux Tapestry belongs, no doubt more important than the small number of surviving examples might lead us to suppose.

How difficult it really is to discuss the secular art of this period, on the basis of what we possess, is best shown by the portrait, which moves irresolutely halfway, as it were, between religious and secular art. The individualizing image, with the emphasis on the personal characteristics of the model, was not yet understood. The Romanesque portrait is nothing but another form of official memorial; we meet it either in the dedicatory pictures of manuscripts or on sepulchral monuments in churches. But the dedicatory picture, which often portrays the writer and the painter as well as the person who commissioned or suggested the manuscript,¹²⁴ paves the way, in spite of its solemnity, for the self-portrait, a very personal genre, though for the moment it is still treated without any emphasis on the individual features of the person depicted. The conflict between the two styles is even more acute in the sculptured portraits on tombs. In early Christian art the person of the deceased either did not appear at all or

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only in a very restrained form; on the tombs of the Romanesque period, however, it becomes the main subject of the whole production.¹²⁵ Feudal society, thinking in class-categories, still fights against the emphasis on personal characteristics, but already favours the idea of the personal memorial.

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The rise of the Gothic style marks the most fundamental change in the whole history of modern art. The stylistic ideals that are still valid today—truth to nature and depth of feeling, sensuousness and sensitivity—all have their origin here. Tested by these standards of feeling and expression, the art of the early Middle Ages seems not merely stiff and awkward—so does Gothic work in comparison with that of the Renaissance—but it also seems crude and unpleasing. Not until Gothic times do we once more get works in which the figures have normal proportions, natural movement and beauty in the proper sense of the word. Even in the case of these works, we cannot for an instant forget that they belong to a bygone age. But in the case of some of them at least, we already begin to experience an immediate pleasure that is not merely due to education or religious sentiment. What then were the causes of so radical a change of style? How did this new conception of art, so closely akin to our own, originate? With what material, economic and social, changes is the new style connected? We should not expect the answer to these questions to reveal any sudden revolution, for great as are the differences that mark off the Gothic age as a whole from the early Middle Ages, it seems at first to be simply a continuation and completion of that eleventh-century transition period, during which the economic and social system of feudalism and the static equilibrium of Romanesque art and culture begin to totter. At any rate, the beginnings of monetary and commercial economy and the first signs of a rebirth of the bourgeoisie and of urban craftsmanship all go back to that time.

Looking at this change, it seems as if the economic revolution which in the ancient world gave birth to the culture of the com-

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mercial cities of Greece is about to repeat itself; at any rate, the new face of Western Europe has more resemblance to the city-economy of antiquity than to the early medieval world. Once more the centre of gravity of social life shifts from the country to the town; once again the town is the source of all stimulation and the focus of all communications. Hitherto the monasteries were the fixed points upon which plans for a journey had to be based; now it is once again the towns where people meet and come in contact with a wider world. The main difference between the medieval towns and the *polcis* is that the latter were chiefly centres of administration, while the former were almost exclusively centres of commercial exchange. In consequence, the breaking up of the old static forms of life is more rapid and more radical than it was in the city communities of the ancient world.

The question as to what was the immediate cause of this growth of towns—which came first, increased manufacture and expanded activity of the merchants, or an increased supply of money bringing with it a movement to the towns—this question is not easily answered. It is just as likely that the market expanded because the purchasing power of the population had risen, the increased rents of land now providing for increased numbers of craftsmen, as it is that the increased rents were a consequence of the new market towns and their needs.¹²⁶ But whatever the actual course of development may have been, the decisive change from the cultural point of view is the rise of two new occupational groups—the artisans and the merchants.¹²⁷ There had, of course, been artisans and merchants before; not merely did farms and manors, monastic estates and bishops' palaces—in a word, the various households—keep their own tradesmen, but some country folk also manufactured articles for the free market, and that at a very early date. These small-scale peasant crafts, however, did not amount to a regular production and were generally only carried on at times when a man's land proved insufficient to maintain his family.¹²⁸ At this stage, exchange of goods was only occasional; people bought and sold as need arose, and there were no merchants, or only here and there for long-distance trade; at any rate, there was not any well-marked group that could be described as a mercantile class. The producers themselves

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normally undertook the sale of their own products; but from the beginning of the twelfth century, we find, alongside of the primary producers, urban craftsmen who were not merely independent, but also regularly occupied as such; similarly we find specialized merchants forming a professional group of their own.

'Urban economy' in the sense of Buecher's theory of economic stages signifies, in contrast to the earlier production for own use, a production for the customer, that is, of goods that are not consumed in the economic unit in which they are produced. It is distinguished from the following stage of 'national economy' in that exchange of goods still takes the 'direct' form—i.e. the goods go direct from the producing to the consuming unit, production as a rule not being for stock or the free market, but to the direct order of definite customers personally acquainted with the producer. We are thus at the first stage of the separation of production from consumption, but still far removed from the completely abstract method of modern production by which goods have to pass through a whole series of hands before they reach the consumer. This difference of principle between the medieval 'town economy' and the modern 'national economy' still remains, even when we pass from Buecher's 'ideal type' of town economy to the actual historical facts; for although pure production to order never existed by itself, the relationship between the tradesman and consumer in the Middle Ages was far closer than nowadays; the producer was not yet faced with a completely unknown and indefinite market as he was later. These characteristics of the 'urban' way of production showed themselves in medieval art in a greater independence of the artist, on the one hand, as compared with the artist of Romanesque times, but, on the other hand, in a complete absence of that modern phenomenon, the unappreciated artist working in a total vacuum of estrangement from the public and remoteness from actuality.

The capital risk, which is the special feature of all production for stock, in contrast to production to order, was borne almost wholly by the merchant, who was, therefore, more dependent than the craftsman upon the vagaries of an incalculable market. It is he who, in this early stage, most truly represents the spirit of money economy and foreshadows the new type of society which

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was to come, based on profit and money-making. It is due to him that, alongside of landed property, hitherto the only property of any consequence, a new sort of wealth, that of mobile business-capital, now emerges. Hitherto the stock of precious metals had been almost exclusively hoarded in the form of useful articles, especially gold and silver cups and plates. The small amount of coin in existence was mostly in the possession of the Church and did not circulate; nobody thought of turning it to any advantage. The monasteries, which were the forerunners of rational business management, did lend out money against extortionate interest,¹²⁹ but only as occasion might offer; financial capital, if that term should be used at all when speaking of the early Middle Ages, was not exploited. Trade now sets this dead, sterile capital once more in movement. It makes money not merely the universal means of exchange and payment, not merely the most desired form of property; it makes it 'work' and renders it productive once more by using it both for the provision of materials and tools and the speculative piling up of stocks, and also as a basis for credit and banking transactions. All this brings with it the first characteristic signs of the capitalist outlook on life.¹³⁰ The mobility of their property, the ease with which it may be exchanged, negotiated and accumulated, increasingly frees individuals from their native environment and from the social station in which they had been born. They rise more easily from one social class into another and take increasing pleasure in impressing upon their fellows their own personal ways of thinking and feeling. Money, making the measurement, exchange and abstraction of values possible, depersonalizes and neutralizes property; it makes the membership of the various social groups depend upon the abstract, impersonal and constantly varying factor of possessing the requisite amount of capital. Thus, in principle, it abolishes the rigid bounds of social castes. As soon as social prestige varies with the amount of money possessed, men are brought down to the level of simple economic competitors; and since the acquisition of this sort of property is due to highly individual gifts of intelligence, business sense, hard-headedness and powers of combination, not to birth, class or privilege, the individual achieves a self-made prestige, whereas the value of

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belonging to a particular social group dwindles. In a word, intellectual quality becomes the source of prestige instead of the irrational qualities of birth and breeding.

The money economy of the towns threatens the whole feudal economic system with extinction. The manorial farm, as we have seen, was an economy without an outlet, restricting itself to production for its own use, since its products were unsaleable. As soon, however, as superfluous production could be turned to account, new life entered into this inefficient, unambitious, traditionalist economy. More intensive and more rational methods of production were explored and everything done to produce more than was needed for home consumption. As the landlord's share of the produce was rather strictly limited by tradition and custom, the new gains at first went to the peasants. However, the lord's need for money grew, not merely through the rise in prices that inevitably resulted from increasing trade, but also owing to the temptations of the many costly novelties which were increasingly coming forward. After the eleventh century there was an enormous rise in standards of living, and men's taste in such matters as clothing, armour and housing underwent a prodigious refinement. They were no longer satisfied with what was plain and useful, but required that each article of furniture or clothing should be an object of value. With their stationary income, the land-owning nobility felt oppressed by these conditions and the only way out they could see for the moment was the colonization of any still uncultivated portions of their estates. So they aimed to lease off any available land, including any which had been left untilled through the flight of a peasant, and to commute the former services in kind into money payments—both because they needed money above all else and because they gradually realized that the working of their land by serfs could hardly compete with the newer methods of an age of incipient rationalization. They come more and more to the conviction that the free workman gets through a lot more work than the serf, and that people prefer a heavier but definitely fixed burden to one which is lighter but indefinite.¹³¹ Incidentally, they get all they can out of their critical position; by freeing the serfs they not merely get tenants who bring in more than the serfs did, but they also get cash in

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considerable sums for each grant of freedom. Even so, they often fail to make ends meet and, to keep pace with the times, have to raise loan after loan, ultimately even selling off parts of their estates to the wealthy and eager townsmen.

By acquiring such landed properties, the bourgeois hopes above all to consolidate his still rather dubious social status. Landed property is to him a bridge giving access to the higher levels of society, since in that age the merchant or artisan who has left the land is still something of a problem. He is somewhere between the nobility and the peasantry, free like a nobleman, but as plebeian in origin as the lowest villain. Indeed, in a sense, for all his freedom, he ranks below the peasant, being regarded as in a way rootless and outcast.¹³² Living in an age in which a personal relationship to the land was looked on as the only full justification for a man's existence, he resides upon a plot which does not belong to him, which he does not till, and which he must at any moment be ready to leave. He shares in privileges hitherto enjoyed by the nobility alone, but he has to buy them with money. He is independent in material things, often richer than many of the nobility, but ignorant how to use his wealth according to the requirements of the aristocratic manner of life—he is in fact a parvenu. Despised and envied both by the nobility and the peasantry, it was long before he succeeded in emerging from this disagreeable situation. In the thirteenth century, however, the town bourgeoisie, if still not quite respectable, is by no means negligible as a social group. From that time on, it stands as the *tiers-état* in the forefront of modern history, and leaves its own characteristic mark on Western civilization. Between the consolidation of the bourgeoisie as a class and the end of the *ancien régime* there are no important changes of structure in Western society,¹³³ but all the changes that do occur during this period are due to the bourgeoisie.

The immediate result of the emergence of an urban, commercial economy was, as we have seen, a move to level old social differences. But money soon creates new antagonisms. At first it served as a bridge between groups separated by birth; later it becomes a means of social differentiation and brings about class divisions within the original solidarity of the bourgeoisie. Class

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antagonisms so aroused overlay, cut across or exacerbate the old differences of estate. All those individuals who follow the same occupation or hold the same type of property, i.e. all the knights, clergy, peasants, merchants and artisans, and again the richer and the poorer merchants, the owners of big and little workshops, the independent master craftsmen and their journeymen, now regard one another as social equals by birth, but as irreconcilable competitors. Such class antagonisms are gradually felt to be more powerful than the former differences of estate. Ultimately, the whole of society is brought into a state of ferment; the former social boundaries become fluid; the new boundaries are sharp enough but are constantly shifting. A new estate had pushed its way in between the nobility and the unfree peasantry, had received recruits from both. The gulf between free and unfree was narrower than formerly; the serfs had in part turned tenants and in part had fled into the towns where they had become free wage-workmen. For the first time they are in a position to dispose freely of their labour and conclude wage-contracts.¹³⁴ The introduction of payment in cash in place of the former payment in kind brings with it new, hitherto undreamt-of liberties. In addition to being able to spend his wages according to his fancy, a gain which was bound to increase his opinion of himself, the workman could get free time for himself more easily than before and spend his leisure just as he liked.¹³⁵ The cultural effects of all this are incalculable, although the direct influence of the new bourgeois element upon the culture of the time shows itself gradually and not simultaneously in all fields. Apart from certain literary types, such as the *fabliau*, for example, poetry was still addressed exclusively to the upper classes. There were plenty of poets of bourgeois origin at the various courts, but they were generally the mouthpieces and exponents of aristocratic taste. As a customer for works of visual art, the individual bourgeois still hardly counts at all; but the production of such work is now almost entirely in the hands of bourgeois artists and artisans while, through the town-corporations, the bourgeois as 'public' already exerts an important influence upon art, especially upon the form of the churches and monumental buildings of the towns.

The art of the Gothic cathedrals is an urban, bourgeois art, in

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contrast to the monastic and aristocratic Romanesque; urban and bourgeois in the sense that laymen took an ever-increasing part in the building of the great cathedrals, while the artistic influence of the clergy correspondingly diminished;¹³⁶ urban and bourgeois because the erection of these churches is inconceivable apart from the wealth of the towns, their cost going far beyond the means of any individual prelate. And it is not merely the art of the cathedrals which shows traces of a bourgeois outlook; the whole culture of chivalry is to some extent a compromise between old feudal hierarchical sentiment and the new liberal bourgeois attitude to life. The influence of the bourgeois is most strikingly shown in the secularization of culture. Art is no longer the private language of a thin stratum of initiates, but a mode of expression that is understood almost universally. Christianity itself is no longer a religion of the clergy, but develops more and more decidedly into a mass-religion. Its moral content is emphasized at the expense of ritual and dogma;¹³⁷ it is humanized and emotionalized. The new tolerance of the 'noble heathen'—one of the few indubitable effects of the crusades—expresses the new religious feeling, freer and more inward, which is characteristic of the age. The mysticism, the mendicant orders and the heresies of the twelfth century are all symptoms of the same trend.

The secularization of culture is primarily due to the existence of the town as a centre of commerce. These centres, where people came together from far and near, where merchants from distant provinces and often from distant countries exchange wares—and no doubt also ideas—must have been the scene of a spiritual interchange quite unknown in the early Middle Ages. International trade also brought a revolution in the trade in works of art.¹³⁸ Hitherto such works, consisting chiefly of illuminated manuscripts and products of craftsmanship, only changed hands in the form of occasional presents or in the execution of direct commissions given to particular craftsmen. Sometimes, it is true, objects of art got from one country to another by way of simple theft; thus, for instance, Charlemagne carried off pillars and other pieces of existing buildings from Ravenna to Aix-la-Chapelle. But after the end of the twelfth century, a more or less regular trade in works of art was established between East and West and North and South

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—though in the case of northern Europe art was almost exclusively an import. In all fields of life we sense instead of the old parochialism a universalistic, international, cosmopolitan trend of affairs. In contrast with the stability of the early Middle Ages, a large part of the population is constantly on the move; knights undertake crusades, the faithful pilgrimages, merchants journey from town to town, peasants leave their land, artists and artisans roam from one building-site to another, teachers and scholars from university to university—among the wandering scholars there emerges something of the romanticism of the tramp.

Apart from the fact that intercourse between people of different traditions and conventions commonly entails a weakening of traditional beliefs and prejudices, the kind of education a merchant required was such as to lead inevitably to his gradual emancipation from ecclesiastical tutelage. The knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic so indispensable to the practice of trade was indeed imparted, at least at first, by clerics, but had no real connection with the stock subjects of clerical education such as grammar and rhetoric. Foreign trade presumably also required some knowledge of languages, but not of Latin. The consequence was that the vulgar tongue everywhere found its way into the schools for the laity which in the twelfth century were already to be found in every larger town.¹³⁹ But instruction in the mother tongue meant the abolition of the clerical monopoly of education and the secularization of culture; already in the thirteenth century we find educated laymen who knew no Latin.¹⁴⁰

The change of social structure in the twelfth century is due in the last analysis to an over-laying and displacement of groupings based on occupations. Now, the knights were originally an occupational group, even though they later became a hereditary one. Originally they were nothing but a class of professional soldiers, drawn from very diverse social elements. Formerly the princes and barons, counts and great landlords, had been warriors and had been granted their fiefs primarily as a reward for actual war-service; but the obligations originally attaching to these grants had gradually lost their force; the number of lords of the old nobility who were really expert in war was now—perhaps always had been—too small to suffice for the needs of the inter-

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minable wars and feuds of the time. He who wanted to wage war (and who did not!) had to provide himself with a force more numerous and more reliable than the old levies had been. To this was due the rise of knighthood, the knights being drawn mainly from the ranks of the manorial retainers (*ministeriales*). The retinue of any great lord included estate-managers, farm-bailiffs, domestic officials, heads of the various workshops, members of the bodyguard and the watch, these latter comprising personal attendants, grooms and sergeants. Most of the knights derived from this last category of retainers, and so were of servile origin. There was certainly a free element among the knights, not derived from the manorial retainers but consisting of descendants of the old military class who had either never received a fief or had sunk back to the level of the mere paid soldier. The retainers, however, provided at least three-quarters of the whole number¹⁴¹ and the residue of freemen was not markedly distinguished from them since, before the formal ennoblement of the retainers, there was a complete absence of any 'knightly' group-consciousness among the warriors, whether free or unfree. In those days the only sharp distinction was between landlords and peasants, rich and 'poor', and the criterion of nobility consisted not in any tangible legal rights but in a noble manner of living.¹⁴² Now in this respect there was no difference between the free and the unfree soldiers who followed one of the great nobles to war; before the constitution of the orders of knighthood they all simply counted as his servants.

Both princes and other great lords required mounted warriors and loyal vassals, and as long as there was no money economy, these could only be rewarded by the grant of fiefs; both the princes and the landlords were ready enough to part with all they could possibly spare from their estates so as to increase the number of their vassals. Grants of such fiefs for service began in the eleventh century; by the twelfth the retainers' appetite for them is almost satiated. With the capacity to hold an estate, the retainer takes the first step towards nobility. In general, the well-known process whereby nobilities are formed repeats itself. The warriors receive estates for service rendered or to be rendered; at first they certainly cannot dispose of these as they like,¹⁴³ but later the

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fiefs become hereditary and their holders independent of their lords. When the fiefs become hereditary, an occupational group of retainers is transformed into a hereditary class of knights. But even after their ennoblement they are a second-class nobility—little nobles with a deeply rooted instinct of servility towards the great nobles. They by no means regard themselves as rivals of their lords—unlike the members of the old feudal nobility, who were all potential pretenders to the throne and an ever-present danger to the princes. At most, the knights change sides when better reward appears to offer; their inconstancy explains the supreme place given to loyalty in the chivalric system of ethics.

This opening of the ranks of the nobility and acceptance of the little fellow of a retainer with his little estate into the same order of knighthood as his rich and powerful lord constitutes the big social novelty of the age. The servitor of yesterday, who had been on a lower rung of the social ladder than the free peasant, is now ennobled and so moves from the company of those without rights into the other, highly desirable hemisphere of the Middle Ages, that of the privileged classes. Seen from this angle the emergence of chivalry is just another instance of the generally increased social mobility and of the same passion to rise which also transformed the serfs into bourgeois and the unfree into free workmen or independent tenants.

If, as appears, the overwhelming majority of the knights were drawn from the retainers, their outlook on life might be expected to colour the whole character and culture of the knights as a class.¹⁴⁴ By the beginning of the thirteenth century, the knights show a tendency to become a closed group to which access is no longer possible. Only the sons of knights could henceforth become knights. The ability to accept a fief or a high standard of living are now no longer enough for a man to be reckoned as noble; strict conditions and the solemn conferment of knighthood according to prescribed ritual have now become indispensable.¹⁴⁵ Access to the nobility is once more bolted and barred, and it is a reasonable assumption that the newly dubbed knights were the keenest advocates of exclusiveness. However that may be, the transformation of the knights into a hereditary and exclusive caste marks a most fateful moment in the history of the medieval

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nobility and certainly the most fateful in that of chivalry. Not merely did the new knights henceforward form an integral part, indeed by far the major part, of the nobility, it is now that the chivalric ideal and the class-conscious ideology of the nobles is worked out—by the knights. At any rate, the principles of a noble manner of life and the ethics of the nobility now take on the clear and uncompromising form known to us from the chivalric epic and lyric. We often find the new members of a privileged group to be more rigorous in their attitude to questions of class etiquette than the born representatives of the group; they are more clearly conscious of the ideas which hold the particular group together and distinguish it from other groups than are men who grew up in those ideas. This is a well-known and often-repeated feature of social history; the *novus homo* is always inclined to over-compensate for his sense of inferiority and to emphasize the moral qualifications required for the privileges which he enjoys. In the present case, too, we find that the knights who have risen from the ranks of the retainers are stricter and more intolerant in matters of honour than the old aristocrats by birth. What seems to the latter a matter of course, something that could hardly be otherwise than what it is, appears to the newly ennobled an achievement and a problem. The feeling of belonging to the governing class, one of which the old nobility had scarcely been conscious, is for them a great new experience.¹⁴⁶ Where the old-style aristocrat acts instinctively and makes no pretensions about it, the knight finds himself faced with a special task of difficulty, an opportunity for heroic action, a need to surpass himself—in fact to do something extraordinary and unnatural. In matters in which a born grand seigneur takes no trouble to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind, the new knight requires of his peers that they should at all costs show themselves different from ordinary mortals. The romantic idealism, the self-conscious ‘sentimental’ heroism of chivalry are idealism and heroism at second hand, and originate primarily in the ambition and the deliberation with which this new nobility set about developing the notions of its own peculiar honour. Its zeal is only a sign of unsureness and weakness which the old nobility does not, or at least did not, suffer from as long as

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uninfluenced by the new, inwardly unstable, company of the knights. This instability shows itself most strikingly in its equivocal attitude to the conventional forms of noble living. On the one hand, it clings to the superficialities and exaggerates the formalities of the aristocratic manner of life; on the other hand, it sets inward nobility of soul above the outward and purely formal nobility of birth and manners. Conscious of its subordinate position, it exaggerates the value of mere forms, but conscious also of possessing capacities equal to or even greater than those of the old aristocracy, it, at the same time, depreciates the value of such forms and of noble birth as such.

The exaltation of noble character above noble origin is also a sign of the thorough-going christianization of the feudal warrior-caste—the result of a long development leading from the rough professional warrior of the age of migrations to the knight of God of the high Middle Ages. The Church encouraged the formation of the new chivalric nobility with all the means at her disposal, consolidated its social position by a form of consecration, charging it with the protection of the weak and oppressed, recognizing it as the Army of Christ, and so raising it to a kind of spiritual dignity. The Church's real object was, no doubt, to check the process of secularization which proceeded from the towns and which otherwise might well have been accelerated by the knights, who were usually poor and relatively traditionless. The worldly tendencies in chivalry were in fact so strong that their attitude to Church doctrine, in spite of the premium set upon orthodoxy, was very much of a compromise. All the cultural innovations of chivalry, its ethics, its new conception of love and the poetry in which this was expressed, betray the same antagonism between worldly and other-worldly, sensual and spiritual impulses.

The whole system of knightly virtues is, like the ethics of the Greek aristocracy, permeated by the idea of *kalokagathia*. None of the knightly virtues are obtainable apart from physical strength and training—still less are they founded upon an actual denial and mortification of those bodily excellencies, as the original Christian virtues were. In the various parts of the system, which comprises those virtues that we may call the Stoic, the chivalric, the heroic and the aristocratic (in a narrower sense of the word),

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the relative value of physical and bodily qualities is different, but nowhere does the physical factor quite lose all significance. The first group in fact contains—as has been remarked of the system as a whole¹⁴⁷—neither more nor less than the well-known principles of ancient ethics in a christianized form. Force of character, endurance, moderation and self-control formed the basic conceptions of the Aristotelian, and later, in a more uncompromising form, of the Stoic ethics: the knights simply took this over, chiefly through the medium of medieval Latin literature. The heroic virtues, especially contempt for danger, pain and death, unqualified loyalty, the quest of fame and honour, were already highly prized in early feudal times; chivalric ethics merely softened the heroic ideal of that epoch, giving it a new emotional tinge, but retaining it in principle. The new attitude to life expresses itself most clearly and directly in the peculiarly ‘chivalrous’ and ‘seigniorial’ virtues: firstly in magnanimity towards the conquered, protection of the weak and respect towards women, in courtesy and gallantry, and secondly in the qualities that still characterize the modern gentleman, such as generosity, relative indifference to chances of profit, fairness and decency at all costs. No doubt, chivalric ethics did not remain entirely uninfluenced by the outlook of the emancipated bourgeois, but their cultivation of these noble virtues brought them into sharp conflict with the commercial spirit of the bourgeoisie. The knights felt their material existence threatened by the bourgeois money economy, and felt nothing but hatred and contempt for the economic rationalism, the calculation and speculation, the saving and bargaining, of the merchants. Their manner of life, permeated by the principle of *noblesse oblige*, their extravagance, their ostentation, their contempt for all manual work and all regular pursuit of gain, is thoroughly unbourgeois.

A more difficult task than the historical analysis of chivalric ethics is that of tracing the derivation of the other two great cultural achievements of chivalry—their new ideal of love and the new type of lyric in which this was expressed. It is obvious from the start that these cultural forms are intimately bound up with life at the courts. The court is not merely a background but the very soil out of which they grow. This time, however, it is

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not the king's court but those of the princes and feudal magnates which take the lead. In particular, it is the small scale of these courts that explains the relatively free and individualized character of chivalric culture. Here everything is less solemn, less ceremonious, incomparably freer and more elastic than at the royal courts which had been the centres of culture in other days. Even at these little courts conventions were still fairly strict. 'Courtly' implies conventional, and always has done, for it is of the very essence of a courtly culture that it should set bounds to the explosive and unruly individuality of men and direct it along well-trodden paths. The representatives of this relatively free court culture still owe their special position not to any qualities that mark them off from the rest of the members of the court, but to a bearing which they have in common with the rest. In this form-governed world originality is disallowed as discourteous.¹⁴⁸ Membership of the court circle is in itself man's highest prize and highest honour; insistence on one's own individuality here seems like a sort of contempt for this privilege. Thus the whole culture of the epoch has its being within the bounds of more or less rigid conventions. The manner of social intercourse, the expression of emotion, indeed the emotions themselves, but also the forms of poetry and art, the descriptions of nature and the figures of the lyric, the 'Gothic curve' or the polite smile of the statues, all these are stereotyped.

The culture of medieval chivalry is the first modern form of culture based on court organization, the first in which there is a real spiritual unity between the princes, the courtiers and the poets. The 'courts of the Muses' are not merely instruments of princely propaganda or subsidized educational institutions, but organs for the fulfilment of a purpose common to those who discover and those who practise noble forms of life. Such a unity was possible only after access to the highest levels of society had been opened to poets from the lower strata, now that a very complete similarity of manners, hitherto inconceivable, had come to exist between the poets and their audiences, and now that the words 'gentle' and 'simple' had come to signify not merely differences of birth but of education, so that a man was not necessarily gentle by mere birth and rank but must become so by training

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of mind and character. It is sufficiently evident that such a standard of value could only have been established by a 'professional nobility' which still remembered how its own privileged position had been achieved, not by a born nobility that had enjoyed these privileges from time immemorial.¹⁴⁰ Now this development of knightly *kalokagathia*, that is, of a new culture attributing moral and social value to aesthetic and intellectual excellence, opened a new gulf between spiritual and secular education. Leadership, especially in poetry, now passed from the clergy, with their one-sidedly spiritual outlook, to the knights; monkish literature loses the leading rôle it had formerly held and the monk is no longer the representative of the age; its typical figure is the knight as he is portrayed, for example, in the 'Rider of Bamberg', noble, proud, intelligent, the fine flower of spiritual and bodily training.

The courtly culture of the Middle Ages is distinguished above all from every earlier court culture—even from that of the Hellenistic courts, which also was strongly influenced by women¹⁴⁰—by its markedly feminine character. It is feminine not merely in that the women take part in the intellectual life of the court and influence the line of poetic creation, but also in that the thought and feeling of the men is in many respects feminine. Unlike the old heroic poetry and even the French *chansons de geste*, which were written for an audience of men, the Provençal love songs and the Breton romances of Arthur are primarily addressed to women,¹⁴¹ and Eleanor of Aquitaine, Marie of Champagne, Ermengarde of Narbonne and the rest of the patrons are not merely great ladies holding 'literary salons', not merely connoisseurs whose suggestions are of decisive importance; often it is actually they who speak through the mouth of the poet. The men in fact owe their aesthetic and moral education to women, while women are the source, object and audience of poetry—and this is not the whole story; not merely do the poets address themselves to women, they see the world through the eyes of women. Woman, who in ancient times had been simply the slave, the possession of man, a prize of war and conquest, whose fate even in the early Middle Ages was still much dependent on the arbitrary will of family and lord, now achieves a position which seems

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at first quite incomprehensible. Even though the improved education of women might be attributed to the constant pre-occupation of their men by military service and to the progressive secularization of culture, we should still have to explain how mere education came to have such prestige as to enable the women to bear rule over society. Again, the new jurisprudence, which in certain cases allowed a daughter to inherit the throne and a widow to take over a great feudal estate, may have contributed in a general way to the increased prestige of the female sex,¹⁵² but by itself this is hardly a sufficient explanation. The chivalric conception of love cannot be adduced in explanation for the very fact that it is not a cause but a symptom of the new position of women in society.

Love was not a discovery of the chivalric poets of the courts but it took on a new meaning through their work. In Greco-Roman literature, it is true, the love motif comes increasingly to the fore, especially after the end of the classical period, but it never takes on the importance which it has in the court poetry of the Middle Ages.¹⁵³ The action of the *Iliad* revolves around two women, but it is not a love story; put any other object of competition in the place of Helen and Briseis and the poem would not be essentially altered. In the *Odyssey* the Nausikaa episode has a certain emotional value of its own, but it is just a single episode and no more. The relations of the hero to Penelope are still altogether on the same plane as those in the *Iliad*; woman is a possession and part of the inventory of a house. The Greek lyric of classical and pre-classical times deals only with sexual love. This may be a source of the utmost joy or sorrow, but is confined to its own particular sphere and without influence on the personality as a whole. Euripides is the first poet in whom love becomes the principal motif of a complicated plot and of dramatic conflict. Old and new comedy take over this promising motif from him, and so it gets into Hellenistic literature, there taking on certain romantic and sentimental features, especially in the 'Argonautica' of Apollonius. But here, too, love appears at most as a tender emotion or a violent passion, not as a sovereign principle of education, an ethical power and channel of the deepest experience of life as it is in the poetry of chivalry. It is well known how

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much Virgil's Dido and Aeneas owe to the Jason and Medea of Apollonius and again what Medea and Dido, the two most popular love-heroines of antiquity, signified for the Middle Ages and so ultimately for the whole of modern literature. It was the Hellenists who discovered the special attraction of the love story, created the first romantic love idylls—the tales of Cupid and Psyche, Hero and Leander, Daphnis and Chloe. But apart from the Hellenistic age, love as a subject of romance has no place in literature until the rise of chivalry; the sentimental treatment of the emotion of love, the development of tension out of the uncertainty whether the lovers are going to get each other or not, are not effects which poetry strove after either in classical times or in the early Middle Ages. In the ancient world the taste was for tales of heroes and for myths, in the early Middle Ages for tales of heroes and saints; if the love motif entered into this at all there was no glamour of romance about it, since even the poets who took love seriously shared Ovid's notion that it was a disease robbing man of intelligence and sapping his will-power, making him wretched and pitiable.¹⁵⁴

Characteristic of chivalric, in contrast with classical and early medieval poetry, is above all the fact that love, although spiritualized, never becomes a philosophical principle as it was in Plato and Neoplatonism; on the contrary, it retains its sensual and erotic character and precisely as such effects the rebirth of the moral personality. New in chivalric poetry is the cult of love, the notion that it is to be guarded and tended; new the belief that love is the source of all that is good and beautiful, and that every odious action or unworthy sentiment constitutes a betrayal of the loved one; new is the tenderness and inwardness of feeling, the pious awe which the lover experiences at the least thought of the lady he loves; new the unending, unsatiated and insatiable because unbounded desire of the lover; new the happiness which is independent of any consummation and remains a supreme blessedness, even in spite of complete lack of success; new finally is the softening and feminizing effect of love on the man. The very fact that the man is suitor is a reversal of the original relationship between the sexes. In archaic and heroic times, when slave hunting and seduction were everyday happenings, wooing

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by the man is unknown. For the man to woo for the woman's love is equally contrary to the habits of the people; here it is the woman and not the man who sings the love songs.¹⁵⁶ Even in the *chansons de geste* it is the woman who makes the advances, but in chivalric circles such behaviour seems discourteous and improper. Courtesy requires that the woman should be cold and that the man should pine. The courteous and chivalric attitude is one of endless patience and utter selflessness in the man, involving the extinction of his own will and the sacrifice of his own being to the will of the woman as a superior being. Courtesy demands of the man complete acceptance of the fact that the object of his worship is wholly unattainable; self-indulgence in the pains of love, an emotional exhibitionism and masochism—all features of modern love-romanticism which here occur for the first time. The lover as longing and renouncing, love as something to which attainment and fulfilment are irrelevant and which is even enhanced by its negative character, a 'love of the remote' without any tangible or even any clearly defined object—all this ushers in the history of modern poetry.

How then can the emergence of this extraordinary ideal of love that seems so incompatible with the heroic feelings of the time be explained? Is it intelligible that a lord, a warrior, a hero, should utterly repress his proud, masterful personality, implore a woman for love, or rather for the boon of merely being permitted to declare his own love—should be willing to accept for his devotion and loyalty a smile, a gracious glance, a friendly word? The queerness of the situation is enhanced by the circumstance that for all the moral rigour of the medieval outlook, this lover openly declares his by no means chaste feelings towards a married woman, who in addition is normally the wife of his liege lord and host. The final oddity is that penniless and homeless minstrels declare their love for their lords' and patrons' wives no whit less freely and frankly than the noble lords do, begging and expecting the same favours as any prince or knight.

In attempting to solve this problem nothing is more obvious than to suppose that these views and this kind of erotic serfdom of the man were merely the outcome of the general legal conceptions of feudalism, that the courtly-chivalric conception of love

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is a mere extension of the political relationship of vassalage into the field of sex relationships. This idea, that love-service is an imitation of vassal-service, was in fact put forward in the earliest days of research into troubadour poetry.¹⁵⁶ That particular version which makes chivalric love a mere by-product of knight-service and regards love-vassalage as nothing more than a metaphor is more recent and was first formulated by Eduard Wechssler.¹⁵⁷ The older idealistic theory of the origin of vassalage derives the social relationship from the ethical one, holding that the idea of fealty required both the lord's personal approval of the vassal and the vassal's confidence in and personal attachment to his lord.¹⁵⁸ But Wechssler's theory asserts that the vassal's 'love', whether for lord or lady, is nothing but a sublimation of his subordinate social position. These love songs, according to him, are no more than an expression of the vassal's homage to his liege, a variant of the political panegyric.¹⁵⁹ The fact is that chivalric love poetry derives from the ethics of fealty not merely forms and expression, images and similes, the troubadour not merely declares himself the devoted servant and loyal vassal of the beloved lady, he even goes so far as to request of her his rights as a vassal and to maintain his claim to reciprocity of loyalty and to favour, protection and aid. These pretensions are clearly just formulae of court convention. Such a transference of vows from the lord to his lady becomes particularly plausible when we take account of the long and repeated absence of barons at the wars and the important circumstance that during their absence from court and castle the powers of the liege-lord were exercised by women. Nothing was more natural than for poets in the service of these courts to sing the praises of the lady and to voice this in those ever more gallant forms which they deemed appropriate to flatter feminine vanity. Wechssler's theory, that the whole love-service, that is, the courtly cult of love and the gallant forms of the chivalric love lyric, was really not the creation of the men but of the women who employed them for the purpose, is therefore not to be rejected out of hand. The most powerful argument which has been adduced against this theory is that the oldest troubadour of all, William IX, Count of Poitiers, the first to clothe his declaration of love in the form of a vassal's homage, was not

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a vassal but a mighty prince. This objection is not, however, entirely convincing, since the declaration of fealty may in the case of the Count of Poitiers have been just a poetical conceit that happened to occur to him, while in the mouth of the later troubadours it might none the less have been based on the real facts of the situation. In fact, it must have been, for otherwise a particular poetical conceit of this kind would not have taken so widespread and tenacious a hold. Even though in the inventor's case it may not have corresponded to his personal circumstances, it was at least grounded in the general conditions of the time.

Whether based on a real or fictitious relationship, the terms of the chivalric love poem seem from the very start to be fixed by established literary convention. The troubadour lyric is 'society poetry' in which even real experiences have to be clothed in the fixed forms of the prevalent fashion. In poem after poem the beloved lady is extolled in the same terms, decked out with the same qualities, represented as embodying the same virtue and beauty; all the poems employ the same rhetorical formulae to such an extent that one could take them all to be the work of one and the same poet.¹⁶⁰ So powerful is this literary fashion, so inescapable the conventions of the court, that one gets the impression that the poets had no more than an abstract ideal in mind, not any individual woman—that their sentiments are derived rather from literary examples than from any living person. It was, presumably, this impression in the main that led Wechsler to declare the entire chivalric love to be fictitious and to deny that there was any real experience of the emotions described in these love songs, except in the rarest instances. The praise of the lady, in his opinion, was genuine, but any love on the part of the singer was normally just a conventional falsehood, the agreed formula of praise. The ladies wanted to be sung and praised for their beauty; no one cared about the credibility of the love that this beauty was supposed to inspire. The emotional element in the wooing was 'conscious self-deception', a well-understood society pastime, an empty convention. Any expression of strong and genuine feeling, Wechsler holds, would not have been at all agreeable either to the lady or the courtiers, it would have been an offence against order and decency.¹⁶¹ There could be no

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question of the lady reciprocating the troubadour's love since, quite apart from difference of rank, the merest suggestion of adultery would have been heavily punished by the husband.¹⁶² The declaration of love was intended as a rule to give the poet a pretext for complaints about her cruelty, and such complaints themselves were really conceived as praise for the lady's irreproachable chastity.¹⁶³

To prove this fiction theory untenable, the high artistic value of the love songs is emphasized, and the old familiar argument adduced that all genuine art must be sincere and based on first-hand experience. In reality, every aesthetic quality, even the emotional value of a work of art, lies beyond such questions as whether it is sincere or insincere, spontaneous or affected, original or academic—for one can never really be sure what the artist did feel, or whether the feelings aroused by contemplation of the work really correspond to those that called forth its production. It is questioned whether the troubadour's love songs, had they contained nothing more than paid flattery, as Wechsler asserts, could possibly have commanded the interest of so large a public,¹⁶⁴ but we must not underrate the power of fashion in a conventionally minded court society; nor was the public really so large, even though it was to be found in all the countries of Western Europe. However, though neither the artistic value of chivalric poetry nor its success necessarily prevent us from stamping it as 'fictitious', we still cannot accept Wechsler's theory without qualifications. Knightly love is certainly a variant of vassalage and as such 'spurious', but it is not a conscious fiction or intentional masquerade. Its erotic kernel is genuine, even though in disguise. Troubadour love and love poetry lasted too long to be a mere fiction. The successful literary expression of fictitious emotions is not, as has been asserted,¹⁶⁵ without parallel in history; the maintenance of such a fiction for generations would certainly be.

Though the vassalage relationship permeated the whole social structure of the age, we should be at a loss were it not for the promotion of retainers to knighthood and the new and exalted position of the poet at court, to explain why this subject was so suddenly taken up, until the whole emotional content of poetry became clothed in terms of this relationship. Any true under-

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standing of the new conception of love must take account of the newly constituted, often propertyless knights, and the ferment that went out from this heterogeneous social group, no less than of the general legal forms of feudalism. There were many born knights, younger sons for whom the paternal estates no longer sufficed, who now roved penniless about the world, often to eke out their living as wandering singers, but if at all possible to establish themselves in service at the court of a great lord.¹⁶⁶ A large number of the troubadours and minnesingers were of humble origin, but since a talented minstrel with a great noble as his patron could easily rise to be a knight, differences of birth were no longer of such great importance. Such knights, who were impoverished and uprooted, were often naturally enough the most advanced exponents of knightly culture. In consequence of their poverty and their social displacement, they felt a certain freedom from social ties and obligations that was impossible to the old feudal nobility. They could, without losing face, dare innovations which to others with firmer roots in society would have seemed fraught with the gravest objections. The new cult of love and the cultivation of the new sentimental court poetry was in the main the work of this floating element in society.¹⁶⁷ They clothed their homage to their lady in the form of love songs couched in courtly but not entirely 'fictitious' terms; they were the first to give a place to service to the lady alongside of service to the lord; it was they who interpreted liege-loyalty as love and love as liege-loyalty. Now in this translation of an economic and social situation into erotic terms, motives of a sex-psychological character also played their part, but these too were sociologically conditioned.

At the courts and castles there were invariably plenty of men and very few women. The lord's entourage consisted of men who were mostly unmarried. Girls of noble families were brought up in nunneries and seldom seen. The princess or lady of the castle was the centre around whom all the life of the place revolved. Knights and court singers all paid homage to this well-educated, wealthy and powerful lady who no doubt may often have been young and attractive as well. Daily contact between a host of young unmarried men and so desirable a woman in

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insular seclusion from the outside world, the caresses of husband and wife which they would inevitably witness with the ever-present thought that she belonged to him wholly and to him alone—all this must have produced in so insular a world a state of erotic tension. This tension, since it had as a rule no other means of satisfaction, found expression in the sublimated form of courtly love. The beginnings of this nervous eroticism would date from the time when many of the young men now in the lady's retinue first came to court, as children into her household, and spent the most important years for a boy's development under her influence.¹⁶⁸ The whole system of chivalric education favoured the growth of strongly erotic ties. Till his fourteenth year a boy was entirely under the control of women, spending his childhood in the care of his mother and the subsequent years in that of the lady of the court, who supervised his education. For seven years he remained in the service of this lady, attended her about the house, accompanied her on journeys and was instructed by her in all the arts of courtly behaviour, in courtly manners and accomplishments. The whole enthusiasm of a half-grown boy would be concentrated upon this lady and his fancy would form his ideal of love after her image.

The patent idealism of courtly-chivalric love should not blind us to its latent sensualism. Nor can we fail to recognize that it grew out of a revolt against the Church's requirement of chastity. The success of the Church in repressing sexual love had at all times fallen far short of her ideals,¹⁶⁹ but now that the boundaries of the social groups and so also the standards of moral value became more fluid, the repressed sensuality broke out with redoubled force and overwhelmed the manners not only of court circles but to some extent of the clergy too. There is hardly an epoch of Western history whose literature so revels in descriptions of the beauty of the naked body, of dressing and undressing, bathing and washing of the heroes by girls and women, of wedding nights and copulation, of visits to and invitations into bed, as does the chivalric poetry of the rigidly moral Middle Ages. Even such a serious work, and one written with such a high purpose, as Wolfram's 'Parzival' is full of descriptions that border upon the obscene. The whole age lives in a state of constant erotic tension;

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one need only mention the strange custom—well known to us from accounts of tournaments—by which the hero wore the veil or the chemise of the beloved lady next to his skin, with the magical effects ascribed to this fetish, to get a picture of this eroticism. Nothing more sharply reflects the inner contradictions in the emotional world of chivalry than its equivocal attitude to love, which combined the highest spiritualization with extreme sensuality. But illuminating as is a psychological analysis of the equivocal nature of these emotions, the psychological facts are a product of historical circumstances which in turn require explanation and can only be explained sociologically. The psychological mechanism of this attachment to the wife of another, and of this intensification of emotion through the freedom with which it could be expressed, could never have been set in motion without the force of ancient religious and social taboos having first been weakened and the soil prepared for such an exuberant growth of erotic feelings by the rise of a new emancipated upper class. In this case, too, psychology, as so often, is only unclear, disguised, incompletely worked-out sociology. The majority of historians, however, faced with the change of style which the rise of knight-hood brought about in all fields of art and culture, cannot rest content with either a psychological or a sociological explanation; they feel bound to search for some direct historical influences, some direct literary borrowings.

Many have followed Konrad Burdach in tracing the novel aspect of knightly love and troubadour poetry to Arabic sources.¹⁷⁰ Now there are, as a matter of fact, quite a number of motifs common to Provençal love lyrics and the Moslem court poetry, above all the same rapturous exultation in sexual love and the same pride in suffering for love. But there is no real evidence that these common features, which by no means make up the whole conception of chivalric love poetry, were taken over into troubadour poetry from Arabic literature.¹⁷¹ One of the most important points which tends to discredit this notion of direct influence is the fact that the songs of the Arab poets are generally addressed to a slave and that there is no trace in them of any mingling of the notions of liege-lady and loved one—which is the very kernel of the chivalric conception.¹⁷² The theory that

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derives all this from classical Latin sources is no more tenable. Rich as are the Provençal love songs in particular motifs and in particular ideas which go back to ancient literature, above all to Ovid and Tibullus, the spirit of those pagan authors is quite alien to them.¹⁷³ Knightly love poetry is, in spite of its sensualism, thoroughly medieval and Christian; it remains, in spite of its novel tendency to portray individual feelings (in striking contrast to Romanesque poetry), far more remote from reality than Roman elegiac poetry. This latter is always concerned with a real love experience, whereas love for the troubadours, as we have seen, is to some extent a poetical pretext, a general tension of soul that is almost without any definite object. However conventional a particular occurrence on which the poet tries out the resonance of his heart-strings, his raptures, his exaltation of women, his attention to his own soul, the passion with which he tears his feelings apart in analysis of his heart's experiences—all this is genuine and utterly alien to the classical tradition.

Least convincing of all the theories of the origin of the troubadour lyric is that which derives it from the folk song.¹⁷⁴ On this theory the origin of the courtly love canzone was a May folk dance, the so-called 'chanson de la mal mariée'; the subject of this was always a young married woman who once a year in May threw off the fetters of marriage and took a young lover for a single day. The only connection of all this with troubadour poetry is the significance of spring—the starting with a nature-setting (*Natureingang*)¹⁷⁵ and the adulterous character of the love;¹⁷⁶ but these features, to all appearance, derive from court poetry and pass from it into folk poetry. There is no trace of a *Natureingang* older than the extant court poetry.¹⁷⁷ The proponents of the folk-song theory, above all Gaston Paris and Alfred Jeanroy, incidentally employ the same method by which the romantics imagined that they could prove the spontaneity of 'folk epic'. Starting from existing, relatively late examples that are definitely not folk literature, they assume the existence of an earlier folk poetry; then they derive from this arbitrarily invented, unproven and doubtless non-existent stage of development the very poems with which they began.¹⁷⁸ Now, it is certainly likely enough that folk-song motifs, snatches of popular wisdom,

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proverbs and turns of speech found their way into chivalric poetry, which also, no doubt, caught up some of the 'poetical sand-drift' from ancient literature that was embedded in the speech of the time,¹⁷⁹ but the supposition that the courtly love canzone developed out of the folk song is unproved and unlikely to be proved. It is possible that there was in France before the rise of the courtly poetry some simple popular form of love lyric; but this is in any case completely lost and we are nowise justified in regarding the refinements, the scholastic complexities, the frequent intellectual and emotional virtuosity of chivalric love poetry as survivals of this lost and doubtless very naïve folk poetry.¹⁸⁰

The most important external influence seems to have come from the Middle Latin poetry of the clergy. The chivalric conception of love as a whole was certainly not formulated by clerics, but secular poets may have taken over from them some of the most important features of that conception. The pre-chivalric clerical tradition of love-service, such as has been posited,¹⁸¹ certainly never existed. It is true that the friendly correspondence between clerics and nuns reveals even in the eleventh century some curious sentimental relationships which hover between friendship and love, and already betray that mingling of the spiritual and sensual familiar to us in chivalric love; but these are just another symptom of the general spiritual revolution which set in with the crisis of feudalism, and reached its fulfilment in the courtly culture of chivalry. The relations between the knightly love lyric and Middle Latin clerical literature is, therefore, one of parallelism rather than of cause and effect or deliberate borrowing.¹⁸² As far as technique went, the knightly poets certainly learnt a good deal from the clergy; in their first essays at poetry it is manifest that they had the forms and rhythms of the Church hymns in mind. There are also points of contact between chivalric love poetry and the clerical autobiographies of the age which, compared with those of the preceding age, reveal a novel and indeed modern character; but these points of similarity, above all the increased sensibility and more accurate analysis of psychical states, are also connected with the general social upheaval and the new valuation of the individual;¹⁸³

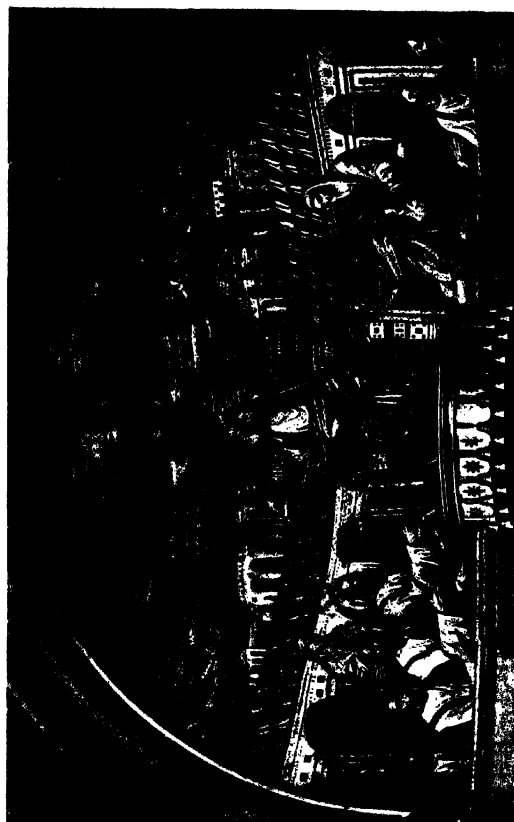
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whether found in ecclesiastical or secular literature, they go back to a common root in social history. The spiritualizing tendency of courtly-chivalric love is doubtless of Christian origin; but there is no need to suppose that troubadours and minnesingers took this over from clerical poetry—the whole emotional life of Christianity was permeated with it. The worship of women may well have been conceived on the pattern of the Christian worship of saints,¹⁸⁴ but the pretended origin of love-service in the service of Our Lady, a characteristic invention of the romantics,¹⁸⁵ is without the slightest historical basis. There is little sign of any worship of the Virgin in the early Middle Ages, and the beginnings, at any rate, of troubadour poetry go back further. Worship of the Virgin did not inspire the new conception of love, but itself gradually took on the quality of courtly chivalric love. Finally, the debt of the knightly conception of love to the mystics, primarily Bernard of Clairvaux and Hugh of St. Victor, is by no means as clear as was formerly supposed.¹⁸⁶

But whatever the various factors determining or influencing it, troubadour poetry is lay poetry of a character utterly antagonistic to the ascetic, hieratical spirit of the Church. The clerical amateur now finally gives place to the secular poet, thus bringing to an end the period of nearly three centuries in which the monasteries were almost the sole homes of poetry. Even during the intellectual supremacy of the monks, the nobility had still continued to form a part of the literary public; but the appearance on the scene of the knight as poet signified, in contrast to the former more or less passive rôle of the laity, something so novel that it must be regarded as marking one of the most profound breaks in the history of literature. One must not, however, think of the social change which set the knight at the head of cultural development as more uniform and universal than it really was. Alongside of the knightly troubadour there was still the professional minstrel to whose level the knight, in so far as he has to depend on his art, may sometimes sink, but who nevertheless represents a separate social stratum. Besides the troubadour and the minstrel, there were naturally still clerics who busied themselves with poetry, though from the point of view of literary history they no longer played a leading part. And finally, there

1. CEILING PAINTING IN THE S. DOMITILLA CATACOMBS IN ROME, 2nd century. The early Christian catacomb paintings preserve essential characteristics of late Roman impressionism, but show at the same time the signs of an often clumsy dilettantism.

2. CHRIST WITH THE APOSTLES. Mosaic in the Ipe of Sta. Pudenziana, Rome. End of the 4th century. Christ here appears, as it were, as a Roman consul in the company of high-ranking senators. In the age immediately following the Edict of Toleration, art again approaches the classical ideal of beauty.





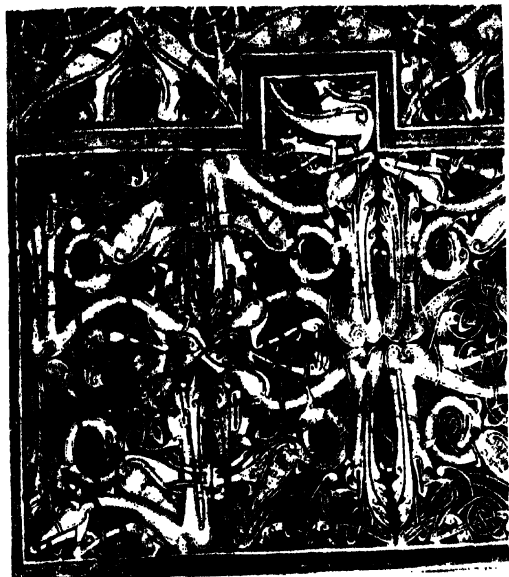
1. EMPRESS THEODORA WITH ATTENDANTS. *Mosaic in S. Vitale, Ravenna, 6th century. The work represents a purely ceremonial scene: the religious act has turned into a court ceremony.*



2. EMPEROR JUSTINIAN AND BISHOP MAXIMIAN. *Detail from the companion picture to the Theodora mosaic. ... The individual characterization of the main figures, in keeping with the tradition of Roman portrait art, is in remarkable contrast to the stereotyped quality of the Byzantine style.*



3. CHRIST WITH ANGELS. *Detail from the mosaics in the Narthex of S. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, 6th century. In these mosaics Christ is depicted as a king, Mary as a queen, the company of angels, martyrs and apostles as a court society behaving in accordance with the strictest etiquette*



1. CRUCIFORM PAGE OF THE
ST. CHAD'S GOSPELS (Detail).
Lichfield, Cathedral Library.
Early 8th century. The mini-
ature painting of the Irish monks
is, with its purely ornamental
conception of art, a typical
product of the age of migrations.

2. THE ARREST OF CHRIST. *From
the Book of Kells, Dublin,
Trinity College, 7th century.*
*In this art even the human body
becomes a mere ornament.*





1. EVANGELIST. From the *Codex aureus* (Harley 2788), London, British Museum. About 800. Example of the sumptuous courtly style with its whole-page richly coloured miniatures, which represent partly dedicatory pictures, partly evangelists.

2. Pen drawing from the *UTRECHT PSALTER*, London, British Museum. About 1000.

The drawing comes from the earliest of the three extant copies of the original which was produced in the diocese of Rheims at the beginning of the 9th century. The work represents the artistically most important example of the manuscripts done in the sketchy impressionistic style, in sharp contrast to the pompous imperial gospel books and obviously intended for a less fastidious public.

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1. THE LAST JUDGEMENT (Detail). Tympanum of the Portal of the Cathedral of St. Lazare in Autun. Second quarter of the 12th century. The typical artistic expression of the ascetic outlook predominant since the Cluniac movement and the apocalyptic atmosphere which the Church is intent on spreading abroad.

2. ST. PETER. Relief from the Portal of Saint Pierre in Moissac. First third of the 12th century. Example of the expressionism of the late Romanesque "baroque".

3. Part of the BAYEUX TAPESTRY. Bayeux Museum. Late 11th century. The most important monument of the secular art of the early Middle Ages. Contrary to the legend, this is, obviously, in no sense the work of a dilettante.



1. RIDER in the East Choir of Bamberg Cathedral. 13th century. The "Bamberg Rider", proud, refined, intellectually and physically highly cultured, is the perfect embodiment of the aristocratic ideal of the Gothic period.

2. EKKEHART AND UTA. Portraits of Founders in Naumburg Cathedral. Second half of the 13th century. The Founders of Naumburg Cathedral are the most impressive representatives in the plastic arts of the nobility which, guided by common ideals in medieval Europe, forms the social milieu and the public of the courtly-chivalric poetry.





1. HEAD of a column figure of the Royal Door of the Cathedral of Chartres. Middle of the 12th century. One of the earliest examples of the individualizing representation of the human form in the Middle Ages.

2. JOHN THE BAPTIST. Porch of the Northern Transept of Chartres Cathedral. First quarter of the 13th century.

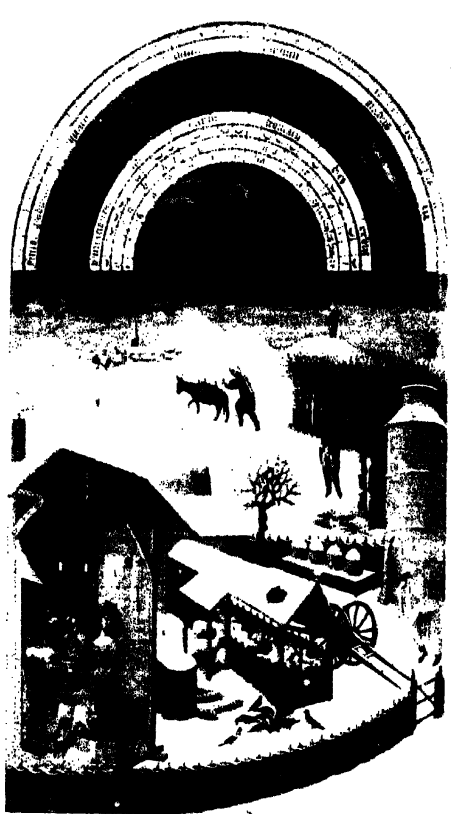
The sculptures of the North Porch of the Cathedral of Chartres are the first perfect examples of the synthesis of spiritualism and naturalism in Gothic art

3. HEAD of an unidentified personality of the central West Door of Rheims Cathedral. Second quarter of the 13th century. The technical skill of the masters of the Gothic already assumes here the characteristics of a playful virtuosity with a tendency to the stereotyped.





1. JAN VAN EYCK: THE JUST JUDGES. *Part of the Holy Lamb, Ghent, St. Bavo. Completed in 1432.*—One of the numerous 'travel landscapes' typical of the dynamic outlook of the late Middle Ages.



2. PAUL DE LIMBOURG: FEBRUARY. *Miniature from the Calendar of the 'Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry', Chantilly, Musée Condé. About 1416.*—The naturalistic picture of manners of bourgeois painting has its origin in this luxurious form of courtly art.

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were the historically and artistically most important group of the wandering scholars, the *vagantes*, who led a life very similar to that of the wandering minstrel and were frequently confused with him, but who none the less, in their pride of education, always took pains to keep themselves distinct. The poets of the age belonged to almost every level of society; we find among them kings and princes (Henry VI and William of Aquitaine), representatives of the great nobles (Jaufré Rudel and Bertran de Born), of the lesser nobles (Walther von der Vogelweide), of the retainers (Wolfram von Eschenbach), bourgeois minstrels (Marcabru and Bernart de Ventadour) and clergy of all degrees. Of the four hundred names of poets known to us, seventeen are women.

Along with the old heroic tales which, after the emergence of the knights, rise once more from the church doors and inns into higher social spheres, everywhere attracting the interest of the courtiers, the popular minstrels also once more came into honour. They are still ranked far below the knights and clergy, who are no more willing to be confused with them than were the poets and actors of the Dionysus theatre at Athens willing to be confused with the mimes, or the *scops* of the migration period with the jugglers. Formerly, however, the poets of different social groups had treated of different themes, and this by itself had been a criterion of social difference. But now that the troubadour handled the same subjects as the minstrel, he must try to surpass the ordinary singer by his method of handling the material. The 'dark rhyming' (*trobar clus*) which now became the fashion, with its deliberate obscurity and love of enigma, its piling on of difficulties of technique and content, is often nothing but a means of shutting off the lower, uneducated classes from the aesthetic pleasure enjoyed by the upper ranks of society and of marking oneself off from the pack of clowns and histrions. It is usually a more or less explicit will to social distinction that explains an artist's pleasure in the difficult and complicated, the aesthetic attraction of hidden meanings, far-fetched associations, disjointed and rhapsodic composition, symbols whose significance is not realized for a while and then never fully exhausted, music that is hard to memorize, 'melodies where one does not know at the

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start how they would end'—in other words, the special attraction of all secret satisfactions and paradises. The importance of this quality of intellectual aristocracy in the troubadours and their pupils may be estimated when one considers that of all the Provençal poets, Dante rated highest Arnaut Daniel, the most obscure and complicated.¹⁸⁷

The plebeian minstrel enjoyed, in spite of his lower rank, enormous advantages through his professional association with the knightly poet. He would otherwise never have been allowed to give public expression to his own individuality, his private subjective feelings, or, putting it in another way, to turn from epic to lyric poetry. Only the new social position of the poet made possible this poetical subjectivism, this poetry of personal confession, this self-important analysis of one's own feelings, and it was only because he now shared the social prestige of the knight that the poet began once again to claim rights of authorship and property in his work. Were it not that the profession of poetry was now followed by persons of superior social status, the fashion of referring to oneself in one's poems would not have established itself so easily. Marcabru speaks of himself in twenty of his forty-three poems, Arnaut Daniel in practically all of his.¹⁸⁸

The minstrels who are now again met with at every court, and indeed are essential features of the most modest court, were masters of elocution—they sang and gave recitations. Were the poems they recited their own work? At first, like their ancestors the mimes, they probably improvised, and up to the middle of the twelfth century were doubtless poet and singer in the same person, but later on a specialization seems to have set in and at least some of the minstrels seem to have confined themselves to reproducing the works of others. At first the princely and noble poets were evidently mere pupils of the minstrels, who, as experienced professionals, undoubtedly helped them in the solution of technical difficulties. The non-noble singers were from the beginning servants of the aristocratic amateurs; later, no doubt, impoverished knightly poets also stood in a somewhat similar relationship of service to those great lords who were amateurs of the art. Occasionally even successful professional poets had recourse to the services of the poorer minstrels. In

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particular the rich amateurs and the more renowned troubadours did not recite their own poetry but had it recited by hired minstrels.¹⁸⁹ Thus arose a remarkable artistic division of labour which strongly emphasized the social distance between the noble troubadour and the common minstrel, at least at first. This distance, however, gradually diminished and the levelling process in the end produced, especially in northern France, a type of poet very similar to the author of modern times, who no longer composed poetry for recitation but wrote books to be read. The old heroic lays had been sung, the *chansons de geste* recited, the early court epics probably read aloud, but the romances of love and adventure are now produced as reading matter for the ladies. The change whereby women became predominant in the make-up of the literary public has been termed the most important change in the history of Western literature.¹⁹⁰ Equally important, however, for the future was the change over to reading as the form of artistic experience. Only when poetry is read can it become a hobby, a habit, a daily necessity. Only so can it become 'literature', enjoyment of which is no longer confined to the solemn moments of life or to special festivities, but which may be drawn upon as desired merely to pass the time of day. Poetry thus loses the last remnant of its numinous character and becomes mere 'fiction', mere invention which can arouse aesthetic interest without claiming any element of conviction. That is why Chrétien de Troyes has been characterized as a poet who, far from believing in them, has no longer the slightest inkling of the real sense of the mysteries round which the Celtic sagas revolve. Regular reading turned the awed hearer into an unconcerned reader—but also, it might be, into an experienced connoisseur, and the evolution of the connoisseur finally unites hearers and readers into a group with a common interest which can properly be called a 'literary public'. The appetite of this public then gives rise, among other things, to the phenomenon of quite ephemeral literature, written to suit the fashion of the hour. The courtly love romances are the first instance of such literature.

Now reading requires a completely different technique of relation from that appropriate to recitation or reading aloud; it demands and makes possible the achievement of novel effects of

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a kind hitherto quite unknown. A work intended for singing or recitation is composed mainly on the principle of simple juxtaposition; it is made up of single songs, episodes or strophes that are more or less complete in themselves. Recitation can be interrupted at almost any point, and the effect of the whole is not seriously impaired if some parts are left out. The unity of such a work is achieved not through its formal composition but through a unity of atmosphere that pervades the whole. Such is the structure of the 'Chanson de Roland'.¹⁹¹ Chrétien de Troyes, on the other hand, by means of retardations, excursions and surprises, achieves special effects of tension which result, not from the particular section taken by itself, but from the relationship of the various parts to one another, their sequence and contrast. Now the poet of the courtly romance of love and adventure adopts his method not merely because, as already remarked,¹⁹² his public is harder to please than the audiences of the 'Chanson de Roland', but also because he is composing for readers and in consequence both can and must produce effects that are impossible to oral recitation, which lasts only for a short period at a time and is liable to be arbitrarily interrupted. These romances for reading usher in modern literature not merely because they are the first romantic love stories of Western Europe, the first poetical works in which love ousts all else, lyricism is all-pervading, and the sensitivity of the poet is the chief criterion of quality, but also because they are—to adapt a well-known conception of dramatic criticism—the first 'récits bien faits'.

The course of development during the age of the knightly troubadour and the popular minstrel leads first to a certain assimilation of these two different social types, but later, towards the end of the thirteenth century, to fresh differentiation between them. This results, on the one hand, in the established, salaried *menestrel* or court poet in the narrower sense, and, on the other in a type of singer who has come down in the world and become a masterless *jongleur*. As soon as the courts began to keep poets and singers with a regular official position, the wandering minstrels lose the custom of the upper classes and address themselves, as they did before their social rise at the beginning of the chivalric period, to a lower class of public.¹⁹³ The salaried court poets, on

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the other hand, in deliberate contrast, develop into real men of letters, with all the petty vanities and all the pride of later humanists. They are no longer content to enjoy the favour and generosity of a great lord; they now aspire to be the teachers of their patrons.¹⁹⁴ And the princes no longer keep them just to amuse their guests, but as companions, confidants and advisers. They have in fact a ministerial position, as their title, '*menestrel*', shows. They are, however, held in far greater esteem than any of the retainers of the old days; in all questions of good taste, courtly manners and knightly honour they are regarded as the highest authorities.¹⁹⁵ They are the true forerunners of the Renaissance poets and humanists, or, at any rate, they are no less so than their antagonists, the wandering scholars (*vagantes*), to whom Burckhardt is inclined to give all the credit.¹⁹⁶

The *vagans* was a cleric or scholar who roamed about singing and reciting, a runaway priest or a student who had abandoned his studies, that, is a déclassé and a bohemian. He is a product of the same economic revolution, a symptom of the same social movement which had produced the town bourgeois and the professional knight, but he already shows important signs of the social restlessness of the modern intelligentsia; he is completely without respect for Church or privileged classes, a rebel and a libertine who is in principle opposed to all tradition and convention. At bottom, he is a victim of the upset social equilibrium, a transitional phenomenon typical of times when masses of people are abandoning the social groups to which they had formerly belonged and which governed the whole life of their members, for other looser groupings that offer more freedom though less protection. With the revival of the towns and the concentration of population in them, and above all with the blossoming of the universities, a new social phenomenon emerged—the scholar-proletariat.¹⁹⁷ A part of the clergy, too, had lost its social security. Formerly the Church had taken responsibility for all pupils of the episcopal or monastic schools, but now that, as a consequence of the greater personal freedom and the general passion to rise in the social scale, schools and universities were crowded with poor youths, the Church was no longer inclined to find posts for all of them. These young people, many of whom could not even

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complete their studies, often led a wandering life as beggars and comedians. Nothing was more natural than that they should have been always ready to revenge themselves with the gall and venom of their poetry upon a society which did so little for them.

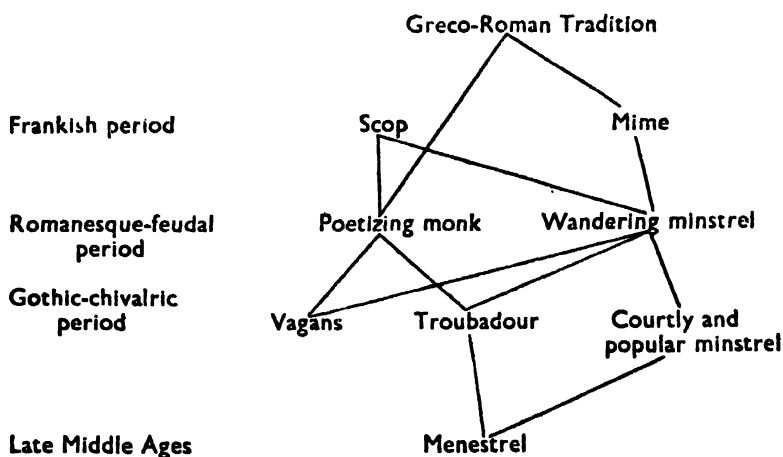
The *vagantes* write in Latin; they are the entertainers of the spiritual, not of the temporal lords. But in all other respects the life of a wandering scholar and that of a wandering minstrel were not very different. Nor was the difference of education between them as great as is commonly supposed. After all, these unfrocked clerics and spoilt students were no more than half educated, like the mimes and *jongleurs*.¹⁹⁸ None the less their works, at least in their general trend, are learned poetry of a particular social class and are addressed to a relatively small and well-educated public; and although these *vagantes* were often obliged to entertain a company of laymen with poems in the vulgar tongue, they kept themselves strictly aloof from the ordinary minstrels.¹⁹⁹

The poetry of the *vagantes* is not always easy to distinguish with certainty from that of the schools.²⁰⁰ A number of Middle Latin love lyrics are scholar poetry, and some of these again were mere school poetry in the sense of being produced as part of the regular instruction. Many of the most fervent love songs were simply school tasks, and these cannot have had much first-hand experience behind them. Even this is not the whole story of the Middle Latin lyric. It is highly probable that at least some of the drinking songs, if not the love songs, originated in the monasteries. Again, poems like the 'Concilium in Monte Romarici' or the 'De Phyllide et Flora' are best ascribed to the higher clergy. In fact, the secular Latin poetry of the Middle Ages is something in which all ranks of the clergy probably had a hand.

The love lyrics of the *vagantes* differ from those of the troubadours mainly in that they speak of women with contempt rather than with favour, and treat sensual love with an almost brutal directness. This is merely another sign of the lack of respect with which the *vagantes* handle everything that was conventionally held in honour—not, however, as has been supposed, a sort of revenge for a chastity which they are not likely ever to have practised. In the Goliard lyrics woman appears in the same harsh light as in the fabliaux. This similarity cannot be accidental and

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leads us to conclude that the *vagantes* took a direct hand in the creation of this whole anti-feminist and anti-romantic literature. At any rate, the fact that no single class escapes the mockery of the fabliaux, neither monk or knight, bourgeois or peasant, supports this conclusion. The wandering scholar occasionally entertains the bourgeois too, and even at times looks upon him as an ally in his own guerilla warfare against the ruling class, but despises him none the less. It would be quite wrong to regard the fabliaux, in spite of their irreverent spirit, their carelessness of form and their coarse naturalism, as out and out popular literature, or to suppose that they were written for an exclusively bourgeois public. The writers of the fabliaux were certainly bourgeois, not knights, and the spirit that pervades them is also bourgeois—rationalistic, without illusions, unromantic and ironical; but just as the bourgeois public took no less pleasure in the chivalric romances than in the many tales of middle-class life, so the nobility liked hearing the impudent stories of the minstrels no less than the heroic romances of the court poets. The fabliaux are not a bourgeois class-literature in the sense that the heroic lay is a class-literature of the warlike nobility or the love romances a class-literature of the courtier-knights. At any rate, they represent the bourgeois in a detached, self-critical mood, and this bourgeois self-criticism which they voiced also gives them an appeal to the higher ranks of society. The fact that the nobility



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enjoyed the light literature of bourgeois circles does not, of course, imply that it regarded this as being on a level with the courtly romances of chivalry. It enjoys the stories in just the same way as it enjoys the efforts of mummers, strolling singers and bear-leaders.

In the late Middle Ages poetry becomes more and more bourgeois, and so does the poet, in line with his poetry and his public. As long, however, as the Middle Ages lasted, no new types—apart from the decidedly bourgeois-minded Meister-saenger—were involved, but only variations on the old ones. The family tree of these various types now appears as shown on the previous page.

9. THE DUALISM OF GOTHIC ART

The spiritual mobility of the Gothic age can in general be traced even more plainly in the works of visual art than in the creations of the poet. Not merely did the practice of the former arts remain in the hands of a more or less unitary occupational group, thus manifesting an almost continuous development, while poetical production, shifting, as it did, from one social level to another, developed in a series of jumps or stages that were often discontinuous; the bourgeois spirit, the impelling factor in the new disequilibrated society, imposed itself more rapidly and more completely in the plastic arts than it did in poetry. In the latter only a few types on the periphery of a massive production directly express the worldly, realistic enjoyment of life characteristic of the bourgeois, whereas this bourgeois spirit permeates the whole of plastic art in practically all its forms. A grand transition of the European spirit from the Kingdom of God to Nature, from the last things to the immediate environment, from tremendous eschatological mysteries to the more harmless secrets of the creaturely world, is here displayed in more striking form than in the typical poetry of the age. In visual art it is earlier apparent that the interest of the artist is about to shift from grand symbols and metaphysical concatenations to the portrayal of the immediately experienced, the sensible and the particular. Organic life,

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which after the end of the ancient world had lost all meaning and value, once more comes to be honoured, and the individual things of experienced reality are henceforth made subjects of art without requiring some supernatural, other-worldly justification.

There is no better illustration of this development than the words of St. Thomas, 'God enjoys all things, for each accords with His essence'. They are a complete epitome of the theological justification of naturalism. Everything real, however slight and ephemeral, has an immediate relationship to God; everything expresses the divine nature in its own way and so has its own value and meaning for art too. And though, for the present, things claim attention only as manifestations of God and are ranked—according to the degree of their participation in God—in a hierarchy, the idea that no stratum of being, however lowly, is quite without significance or spark of divinity, and so none wholly unworthy to be portrayed in art, marks a new epoch. Accordingly, in art too, the conception of a God wholly independent of the world gives way to that of a divine power working in created things. The God who 'impelled from without' corresponded to the aristocratic world-view of early feudalism; the God who is present and working in all the orderings of nature corresponds to the attitude of a more liberal world in which the possibility of rising is not entirely excluded. The metaphysical hierarchy of things still reflects a society that is built up of estates, but the liberalism of the age already voices itself in the conception that even the lowest stage of being is in its own way indispensable. Formerly an unbridgeable gulf separated the estates, but now they have contact with one another. Accordingly, as a subject of art also, the world is represented as a continuous, though elaborately graded reality.

It must be obvious that in the high Middle Ages there was no possibility of the sort of naturalism which reduces the whole of reality to a mere sum of sense impressions any more than of a total replacement of feudal forms of rule by the bourgeois manner of life, nor again of any radical abolition of the spiritual dictatorship of the Church for a free and untrammelled secular culture. In art, as in all other fields of culture, what we find is just a certain balance between freedom and restraint. Gothic

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naturalism is an unstable equilibrium of world-affirming and world-denying impulses, just as the whole of chivalry is permeated by an inner contradiction, and just as the whole religious life of the period fluctuates between dogma and inwardness, between clerical creeds and lay piety, between orthodoxy and subjectivism. The same inner contradiction, the same spiritual polarity, manifests itself in all these social, religious and artistic oppositions.

The most striking manifestation of this dualism is the peculiar feeling for nature in Gothic poetry and art. Nature is no longer a dumb, soulless, material world, as it seemed—and was bound to seem—to the eye of the early Middle Ages with its Jewish-Christian idea of God as an invisible spiritual lord and creator. Belief in the absolute transcendence of God then necessarily involved a depreciation of nature, just as now the prevalent pantheism brought about its rehabilitation. Before the Franciscan movement only a fellow-man, but thereafter any creature, can be counted as 'brother';²⁰¹ this new idea of love, too, is in harmony with the liberal trend of the period. Man searches nature no longer merely for analogies of a supernatural reality, but rather for traces of his own personality and reflections of his own feelings.²⁰² A meadow in bloom, a stream covered with ice, spring and autumn, morning and evening, are regarded as stations in the soul's pilgrimage; yet in spite of this feeling for correspondence, an eye for the individual in nature is still lacking; the images drawn from nature are ready-made and rigidly conventional, wanting in personal variety and intimacy.²⁰³ In the love songs stock descriptions of spring and winter landscapes occur again and again and are finally reduced to empty conventional formulae. It is, however, noteworthy that nature should have become an object of interest at all, and that it should seem in itself to be something worth describing. The fact is that man's eyes must first be opened to nature before they can discover individual features in her.

Much more consistently and clearly than in these descriptions of landscape, Gothic naturalism manifests itself in the representation of human form. In this field we meet everywhere a thoroughly new conception of art, and one radically opposed to

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the stereotyping abstraction of Romanesque. Interest is now completely centred upon the individual and the characteristic—even before the time of the statues of the kings at Rheims and the portraits of the founders at Naumburg; the freshness, vitality and directness of these portraits is already to be found to some extent in the figures on the west portal at Chartres.²⁰⁴ These, too, are so accurately drawn that we feel sure that they must have been studies of actual living models. The kind old man with the look of a peasant, high cheek bones, broad splayed nose and somewhat slanting eyes must have been personally known to the artist. The remarkable fact is that these figures, though still showing the old archaic clumsiness and heaviness, though as yet without any trace of the later chivalric animation, are so surprisingly full of character. Feeling for the individual is evidently one of the first symptoms of the new dynamic. It is astounding with what suddenness an art which had considered the human race only in its totality and uniformity, distinguishing men merely as saved or damned and disregarding all other individual differences as utterly irrelevant, now gives way to a completely different attitude that emphasizes and tries to seize the uniqueness in each figure.²⁰⁵ It is astounding how suddenly a sense for the ordinary things of everyday life awakens, how soon people begin once more to observe, to see things 'correctly', to take pleasure once again in the accidental and trivial. The far-reaching character of the change of style is shown in the fact that, even with an idealist such as Dante, it is his eye for little characteristic details that is the source of supreme poetical quality.

What has really occurred? The essential change is that the one-sidedly spiritual art of the early Middle Ages, which rejected all imitation of directly experienced reality and all confirmation by sense, has given way to an art that makes all validity of statement, even about the most supernatural, ideal and divine matters, depend upon achieving a far-going correspondence with the natural sensible reality. The whole relationship between Spirit and Nature is thus altered. Nature is no longer characterized by absence of Spirit but rather by her spiritual transparency, her power of expressing the spiritual, though not yet by a spirituality of her own. Such a transformation could only occur following a

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change in the conception of truth itself, which now, instead of its former one-sidedness, takes on a dual aspect—in other words, it could only occur after men had come to recognize two different ways of truth, or rather had discovered that there are two different kinds of truth. Now the idea that the representation of a state of things true in itself must, if it is to be artistically correct, conform to the particular conditions given in sense experience, so that the artistic and ideal value of a representation may be very unequal—this new idea of the relationship between values was completely unknown to the early Middle Ages, and simply means that the well-known contemporary philosophical doctrine of the ‘duality of truth’ is now applied to art. Nowhere else is the division of mind, which was brought about through the breach with the old feudal traditions and by the gradual emancipation of men’s minds from the Church, more sharply expressed than in this doctrine, which must have seemed monstrous in any earlier age. For what could be more incomprehensible to an age of unshaken faith than that there should be two different kinds of cognition and two different sources of truth—that faith and knowledge, authority and reason, theology and philosophy, *contradict* one another, while each of these in its way may express a kind of truth? The doctrine pointed a way that was full of danger, but which was the only way out for an age already dissatisfied with unconditional belief, though not as yet very deeply impregnated with the scientific spirit, an age unwilling to sacrifice its faith to its knowledge or its knowledge to its faith, and so unable to build its culture except upon some synthesis of the two.

Idealism in the Gothic period was at the same time a naturalism which sought to represent spiritual and ideal figures, rooted in a super-sensible world, in a manner that would also be empirically correct. In this art was in line with the philosophical idealism of the age, which held that ideas were not apart from but in particular things, thus upholding the reality both of ideas and of particulars. Translated into the terms of the historical dispute, this meant that universals were considered as immanent in the data of sense, and as not having any objective existence whatever apart from them. This moderate nominalism, as the doctrine is

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called in the history of philosophy, was based on a world-view that was still thoroughly idealist and supernaturalist, but was none the less further removed from absolute idealism (i.e. the 'realism' of the dispute) than from the later extreme nominalism which denied any sort of objective existence to ideas, and only admitted the individual, concrete, non-recurrent, unique events of sense experience as having ultimate reality. This taking account of the individual thing in the search after truth was in reality the decisive step. For even barely to recognize that there are individual things, to question whether the individual existent may be substantial, is to open the door to individualism and relativism, and to imply at least a partial dependence of truth upon the temporal and mutable facts of this world.

The problem around which the dispute about universals revolved is not merely the central problem of philosophy, not merely the philosophical problem par excellence of which the fundamental oppositions in philosophy—between empiricism and idealism, relativism and absolutism, individualism and universalism, historicism and anti-historicism—are but variants; it is far more than merely a philosophical problem. It is in fact the epitome of those vital questions which put themselves as soon as any kind of culture has been developed, and about which the individual, as soon as he becomes conscious of himself as a spiritual being, is called upon to make up his mind. The moderate nominalism, which does not deny the reality of ideas, but regards them as inseparable from the things of sense experience, is the key to the whole of Gothic dualism, both to the conflicting impulses in the economic and social structure of the time and to the inner contradictions between the idealistic and naturalistic elements in its art. The doctrine of nominalism here plays exactly the same part which the Sophistic movement played in the history of ancient art and culture. Each is the typical philosophical doctrine of an anti-traditional, comparatively liberal-minded epoch. Both are philosophies of an age of enlightenment, their essence being that they treat as relative values, and thus mutable and transitory, standards which were hitherto looked upon as eternal and universally valid. They refuse to admit any such 'pure' and absolute validity independent of individual conditions.

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The shifting of the philosophical basis of the medieval world-view by the substitution of a nominalist for a realist metaphysic can only be explained by reference to the sociological background. Realism was appropriate to an essentially undemocratic order of society, to a hierarchy in which only the peaks counted, to absolutist organizations which transcended the individual and confined life within the framework of Church and feudality without allowing any freedom of movement. Nominalism, on the other hand, reflected the dissolution of authoritarian forms of community and the triumph of a social life built out of infinite individual gradations over one based on unconditional subordination of the individual. Realism is the expression of a static and conservative, nominalism that of a dynamic, liberal and progressive outlook. Nominalism, which claims for every particular thing a share in being, corresponds to an order of life in which even those on the lowest rung of the ladder have their chance of rising.

The dualism reflected in the relationship of Gothic art to nature is also manifest in its solution of the problems of composition. On the one hand, Gothic art abandons the decorative and predominantly cumulative style of Romanesque composition, replacing this by forms more akin to the classical, based upon the principle of concentration. On the other hand, it breaks up the whole, which in Romanesque art was at least pervaded by a certain decorative unity, into a number of partial compositions, each one in the main built up according to the classical principle of unity and of subordination, but in total giving the effect of a rather indiscriminate conglomeration of subjects. There are efforts to open out the crowded Romanesque compositions and to depict scenes complete in time and place, instead of mere collections of particulars linked only in symbolical meaning or through the decorative scheme, but even so Gothic composition is still mainly additive and in this far removed from the spatial and temporal unity of classical work.

The principle of 'continuous' representation, the inclination to review, as in a film, all the particular phases of an event, the readiness to overlay the 'pregnant moment' with an epic wealth of detail—signs of an artistic approach which we first met with in

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late Roman times and which never quite disappeared throughout the Middle Ages—now comes to the fore again in the cyclical type of composition. The same principle finds its crassest expression in medieval drama, which shows such a passion for change and variety that it has been termed the 'drama of movement' (*Bewegungs-drama*), as opposed to the classical 'single-place drama' (*Einortsdrama*).²⁰⁰ The Passion plays, with their numerous scenes set up alongside of one another, their hundreds of performers, and their performances frequently lasting for several days on end, run through each stage of the action to be represented, dwell upon each single episode with an insatiable love for the spectacular, and show far more interest in the movement of events than in single dramatic situations. These 'film dramas' of the Middle Ages are in a sense the most characteristic, even though qualitatively perhaps the most insignificant creations of Gothic art. The new artistic urge often led to cathedrals being left unfinished or, if finished, to their giving us the feeling, of which Goethe was the first to become conscious, that they are somehow incomplete, indeed impossible to complete, because in the process of endless, interminable development. This impulse into the unlimited, this inability to be content with any conclusion, comes out all the more clearly in the Passion plays because of their extreme naïvety. It is in the 'drama of movement' of the Middle Ages that its dynamic sense of life, its unrest, dissolving traditional modes of thought and feeling, its nominalistic turning to the multiplicity of changing and transitory particulars, are most directly apprehended.

The dualism shown in the various social, economic, religious and philosophical trends of the age, in the antagonisms between consumption-economy and commercial economy, feudalism and bourgeoisie, other-worldliness and inner-worldliness, realism and nominalism, dominating the whole relationship of Gothic art to nature and the inner structure of its composition, also manifests itself in a polarity of rational and irrational elements in art, especially in architecture. The nineteenth century, which naturally sought to explain the character of this architecture in terms of its own technological frame of mind, emphasized the rationalistic features. Gottfried Semper characterized Gothic art as a

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'simple translation of scholastic philosophy into stone',²⁰⁷ and Viollet-le-Duc saw in it simply the application and illustration of mathematical laws;²⁰⁸ both of them in fact regarded it as art governed by abstract necessity, in contrast with the irrationality of aesthetic impulses. Both of them, and indeed the whole nineteenth century, explain this architecture as a 'calculating engineer's art' that draws its inspiration from practical utility, and expresses simply what is technically necessary and structurally possible. It was believed that the principles of Gothic architecture, above all its exhilarating verticalism, could all be derived from the ribbed vault, a technical invention. This mechanistic doctrine fitted in well with the rationalistic aesthetics of the century; it was held that in a genuine work of art no single detail could be altered without impairing the whole, and a Gothic building, with its strict logic and austere functionalism, was looked on as the very prototype of an artistic whole that must be utterly ruined by any addition or subtraction.²⁰⁹ It seems extraordinary that such a doctrine should ever have been applied to Gothic architecture, which, with the chequered history of its constructions, most strikingly illustrates the fact that the final form of a work of art is as much due to chance, or what in relation to the original plan looks like chance, as to any one basic idea.

Dehio regards the invention of cross-vaulting as the really creative event in the originating of Gothic, and the particular forms of Gothic architecture as merely consequences of that one technical achievement. Ernst Gall was the first to reverse the relationship, representing the new formal ideal of vertical composition as the primary factor and the technical execution of this idea as derivative, subordinate and secondary, both in time and in artistic analysis.²¹⁰ Others have even maintained since that the practical value of most of the 'technical achievements' of Gothic cannot really be put very high; that the rib in particular has no real structural function and that originally both cross-vaulting and buttresses had an essentially decorative purpose.²¹¹ The issue in this controversy between the rationalists and the irrationalists is in the last resort the same as the issue between Semper and Riegl on the foundation of style generally.²¹² One party is anxious to derive artistic form from the particular practical task in hand

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and its technical solution; the other emphasizes those many cases where the artistic idea is achieved only by a certain straining of the available technical resources, the technical solution itself being to some extent the result of pursuing a certain artistic form. Both parties go to opposite extremes but fall into the same error; for if the technicism of Viollet-le-Duc has appropriately been called 'romantic mechanics',²¹³ the aestheticism of Riegl and Gall is no less the product of romantic illusionism as to the freedom of the artist's intention. In none of the phases of production of a work of art are artistic purpose and technique really separable; both are always but aspects of a process and only distinguishable in theory. To treat one of the two as an independent variable is illegitimately and irrationally to exalt one above the other and is a 'romantic' way of thinking. The true relationship of these two motives to one another by no means appears from their subjectively felt sequence in consciousness during an act of creation, for this sequence is influenced by so many incalculable factors as to be simply 'accidental'. As a matter of historical fact, it is just as likely that the rib vault 'was first introduced for purely technical reasons and its artistic possibilities realized subsequently',²¹⁴ as that the vision of a certain form preceded this technical invention, the architect being led by this vision in his technical calculations, even though possibly unaware of it. In such circumstances no certainty of a scientifically verifiable sort is obtainable. We may none the less assume that these principles are connected with the changing social background of the creative artist and can suggest why they may be found in agreement or in conflict with one another. In periods such as the early Middle Ages, which in general were free from social conflict, there is not, as a rule, any radical antagonism between artistic intention and technique; the art forms and the technique are employed harmoniously and say the same thing in different ways, the one factor being no more rational or irrational than the other. But in times like the Gothic age, when the whole of culture was rent by antagonisms, it often happens that the spiritual and material elements in art speak different languages and, as in the present case, the technique appears rational but the artistic aims irrational.

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The interior of the Romanesque church is a self-contained, stationary space that permits the eye of the spectator to rest and remain in perfect passivity. A Gothic church, on the contrary, seems to be in process of development, as if it were rising up before our very eyes; it expresses a process, not a result. The resolution of the whole mass into a number of forces, the dissolution of all that is rigid and at rest by means of a dialectic of functions and subordinations, this ebb and flood, circulation and transformation of energy, gives us the impression of a dramatic conflict working up to a decision before our eyes. And this dynamic effect is so overwhelming that beside it all else seems a mere means to this end. So it comes about that the effect of such a building is not merely not impaired when it is left uncompleted; its appeal and its power is actually increased. The inconclusiveness of the forms, which is characteristic of every dynamic style, gives emphasis to one's impression of endless, restless movement for which any stationary equilibrium is merely provisional. The modern preference for the unfinished, the sketchy and the fragmentary has its origin here. Since Gothic days all great art, with the exception of a few short-lived classicist movements, has something fragmentary about it, an inward or outward incompleteness, an unwillingness, whether conscious or unconscious, to utter the last word. There is always something left over for the spectator or reader to complete. The modern artist shrinks from the last word, because he feels the inadequacy of all words—a feeling which we may say was never experienced by man before Gothic times.

Now, a Gothic building is not merely itself a mass in movement; it mobilizes the spectator, too, and turns an act of enjoyment into a process with definite direction and gradual accomplishment. Such a building cannot be taken in all at once from any possible view-point; from no quarter does it present a complete, restful view, disclosing the structure of the whole. On the contrary, it compels the spectator to be constantly changing his view-point and permits him to gain a picture of the whole only through his own movement, action and power of reconstruction.²¹⁶ Greek art in the age of early democracy, when social conditions were similar, had also enforced a similar activity on

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the spectator. Here, too, he was shaken out of restful contemplation of the work of art and impelled to follow the movements of the subject represented. The resolution of the compact, cubic form and the emancipation of sculpture from architecture are the first steps Gothic art takes towards the rotation of the figures by means of which classical art set the spectator in motion. But the decisive step in both periods is the rejection of frontality. This principle is now finally abandoned, to appear hereafter only for two quite short periods in all, at the beginning of the sixteenth and the close of the eighteenth century. Since then frontality and the formal rigorism which it betokens has remained something archaistic and programmatic that can never again be fully realized. In this respect, too, Gothic art starts an artistic tradition unbroken until our own day, and whose importance is unequalled by any subsequent tradition.

In spite of the similarity between the Greek and the medieval ages of enlightenment and their effects on art, the Gothic style brings something completely novel and completely unclassical, yet no whit inferior, to replace the Greco-Roman tradition. In fact, it is only with the rise of the Gothic spirit that the reign of classical standards comes to an end. Romanesque art was no less transcendental than Gothic; it was indeed in many respects more highly spiritualized than any subsequent art, yet was none the less closer in its forms to ancient art than the far more sensual and secular Gothic. Gothic is in fact permeated by something which we look for in vain in Romanesque art and which, as against the Greco-Roman tradition, is completely novel. Its sensitivity, intimacy of experience and inwardness of feeling was unknown to the subtlest artist of the ancient world. Now this sensitivity is the peculiar effect of an interpenetration of Christian spiritualism and the awakening sensualism of the Gothic age. It was not the emotionalism of Gothic by itself that was new, for late classical art, too, was emotional, even melodramatic, and Hellenistic art also aimed to stir and inspire, to captivate and overwhelm the senses; the novel element consists in an intimacy of expression whereby the artist makes any work of Gothic or post-Gothic art a sort of confession of his personal faith. And here we meet once again with the antagonism that pervades all

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forms of Gothic culture. The confessional character of modern art, which presupposes a unique and first-hand experience in the artist, has from Gothic times onwards had to assert itself against a burden of technique that is tending to become more and more of an impersonal routine. For no sooner has art overcome the last remnants of primitiveness and reached a stage when the mere manipulation of the means of expression is no longer an effort, then the dangers of having a ready-made technique available for all sorts of purposes begin to make themselves felt. With Gothic the lyricism of modern art, but also its cult of virtuosity, begins.

10. LODGE AND GUILD

The masons' lodge (*opus, oeuvre, Bauhütte*) of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was a co-operative organization of the artists and artisans engaged upon the building of a large church or cathedral under the artistic and administrative direction of persons appointed or approved by the body which had commissioned the building. The function of manager (*magister operis*), who was charged with the provision of materials and labour, and that of the master mason or architect (*magister lapidum*), who was responsible for the artistic planning, assignment of tasks and co-ordination of the work of individuals, may often have been combined in the same person, but there is no doubt that as a rule they were kept in separate hands. The artistic and administrative heads had much the same relation to one another as that of the director and the producer of a film, the production organization of which presents the only close parallel to that of the medieval masons' lodge. There is, however, one important difference in that the director normally works with different personnel for each film, whereas changes in the personnel of the lodge by no means always coincided with the completion of a particular building; on the contrary, some of the workers formed a nucleus which stayed with the architect after the completion of a particular task, whereas other workers came and left while the work was in progress.

We know that the Egyptians had developed a form of artistic

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group-work and that the Greeks and Romans had building corporations which were mobilized in groups for big projects; but none of these associations had the self-contained, self-governing character of the medieval lodge; an autonomous occupational group of this kind was alien to the ideas of the ancient world. Again the only thing in the early Middle Ages at all resembling the lodge was the collaboration upon a particular building of the various workshops belonging to the same monastery; but this was lacking in one of the most essential characteristics of the later associations—their mobility. It is true that the lodge of the Gothic period, when the building of churches often took a very long time, frequently remained for generations upon the same site; but if the work was completed or interrupted, they moved off under the leadership of their architect and took on new tasks.²¹⁶ The mobility which was of such fundamental significance for the whole artistic production of the age showed itself indeed not so much in the migration of the lodge as a compact group, but rather in the wandering life of the individual artist-craftsman, his habit of coming and going, of leaving one company and joining another. We find, it is true, even in the monastic workshops workmen who have been imported and taken on for a limited period only, but the majority of the workers in those workshops were monks of the monastery, who would offer strong resistance to alien and disturbing influences. The stability of purely local production, however, with its continuity and relative slowness of artistic development, comes to an abrupt end as soon as production shifts from monastery to building yard and gets into the hands of laymen. From that moment new ideas begin to be accepted from all quarters and widely disseminated.

The builders of the Romanesque period still had to rely mainly on the labour of their serfs and tenants, but once money came into use, free labour from outside the locality could be employed to a greater extent so that something of an inter-local market for labour began to emerge. Thereafter the scale and speed of building varied according to the money that could be made available; if the building of a Gothic church sometimes went on for centuries, this was due as a rule to the periodic scarcities of money. When money was to be had, the building went forward rapidly

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and without a break, but if it ran out, the work had to be slowed down or stopped altogether for a time. Thus the organization of the work differed according to the means of the promoter; either the work went forward steadily and the same personnel was continuously employed with but little change, or production was kept going only with interruptions and changes of tempo, now more and now fewer artists and artisans being employed.²¹⁷

When, with the rebirth of the towns and the introduction of a money economy in the building trade, the lay element got the upper hand, there was not at first any organization able to maintain discipline in place of the monastic workshop. In any case, the building of a Gothic cathedral was a much more lengthy and complicated proceeding than the building of a Romanesque church had been. It required a far greater variety of work-people and a much longer time for its completion, both because of the nature of the work and often, too, owing to the financial circumstances already mentioned. This situation demanded a strict regulation of the work and one that departed from the traditional methods. A solution was found in the lodge, with its precise rules regarding the taking on, payment and training of workers, its hierarchy of architect, master-craftsmen and journeymen, its special restrictions laid upon the members' rights of intellectual property in their own work, and its unconditional subordination of the individual to the artistic requirements of the common task. The aim was to achieve a frictionless division and integration of the labour available, with the utmost possible specialization and the completest harmonization of the products of different individuals. This aim could only be attained where a real unity of spirit possessed those taking part, for only a willing subordination of personal wishes to the will of the architect and continuous and intimate contact between the artistic director and each of his fellow workers could enable the required levelling of individual differences to be achieved without impairing the artistic quality of the particular products. How could such a division of labour as this, and that in so complex a spiritual process as artistic creation, ever be attained?

There are two completely opposed but equally romantic views on this subject. The one is inclined to see in communal

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organization of art production the indispensable condition for the highest achievement, while the other holds that the breaking down of tasks and the limitation of individual freedom endangers—to say the least—the production of any genuine work of art. People are accustomed to take the favourable view of communal production when speaking of medieval art, and the unfavourable view when speaking of the film, for example. Both attitudes, for all that they lead to contradictory conclusions, share at bottom the same opinion of the nature of artistic creation. Both regard the work of art as a product of a unitary, undifferentiated, indivisible, quasi-divine act of creation. The romantics of the nineteenth century personified the collective spirit of the lodge as a sort of folk soul or group soul, attributing individuality to that which has no individuality and crediting the work of a collection of people to this supposed unitary and personal group soul. The critics of the film, on the other hand, do not mistake the collective character, that is, the composite organization, of film production. Indeed they stress its impersonal or, as they put it, 'mechanical' character; but they deny all artistic quality to the product just because it is the creation of an impersonal and atomized process. They forget that the individual, independent artist's method of working is by no means as unitary and organic as the romantics imagine. Any spiritual process that is at all complex, and artistic creation is one of the most complicated of all, consists of a whole series of more or less independent functions—conscious and unconscious, rational and irrational—and their various products have to be thoroughly sifted and edited by the artist's critical intellect in much the same way as the manager of the lodge tested, corrected and harmonized the products of the individual workmen. To suppose that the faculties and functions of the human soul work as a perfect unity is as untenable and as much a romantic fiction as the pretended independent reality of folk souls and group souls apart from the individual souls. Individual souls may conceivably be portions or diffracted rays of some collective soul, but this collective soul has its existence exclusively in its components and diffractions. In the same way the individual soul normally manifests itself only in particular functions; harmony of its various attitudes is something that

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—apart from states of ecstasy, which are, however, not relevant to art—is only attained after severe struggle, no free gift of the moment.

The lodge was an organization of labour appropriate to an age when Church and town corporations were practically the only purchasers of works of art. They formed a relatively small circle whose demand was only intermittent and in general soon satisfied. The artist had to change the scene of his activities frequently if he was to find employment. But he need not go alone, nor be thrown entirely on his resources when he went on his travels; the lodge to which he could belong possessed the adaptability which the times required. It settled in a place and remained there as long as there was work, moved on as soon as there was no more to do and established itself where some new employment was to be found. It offered the individual what was for those times a very great measure of security; an able workman could stay in the company as long as he wanted, but he was also free to leave it for another or, if of a stay-at-home disposition, he could join one of the big permanent cathedral companies of Chartres, Rheims, Paris, Strasburg, Cologne or Vienna. Only when the purchasing power of the town bourgeois had grown to such an extent that private individuals and not merely corporations began to form a regular market for works of art, was the artist in a position to leave the lodge and settle in a town as an independent master.²¹⁸ This point was reached in the course of the fourteenth century, but at first it was only the painters and sculptors who freed themselves from the lodge and went into business on their own account. The building craftsmen remained in the companies for nearly two centuries longer, for it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that the building orders of the private citizen offered a sufficient source of income. When this came about, the building workers also left the lodges and joined the guilds, which had long included sculptors and painters. The concentration of artists in the towns and the competition which developed between them made some collective economic organization necessary from the very start. This would naturally be effected on the lines of the guild, the form of self-government which the rest of the tradesmen had devised for themselves

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centuries before. Guilds in the Middle Ages arose wherever an occupational group felt its economic existence threatened by an influx of competitors from without. The object of the organization was to exclude or at least restrict competition. The outward manifestation of its internal democracy, which in the early days was real enough, was from the very first an extremely intolerant protectionism against all outsiders. The regulations were aimed solely and exclusively to protect the producers and not in any way to protect the consumers, as the pretence was and as idealizing romantics would like us to believe—the mere prevention of free competition by itself was injury enough to the consumer's interests. As for the regulations prescribing a minimum quality in the product, these were by no means unselfish in their aim and were framed so as to give just enough latitude to ensure the members a steady market for their own products.²¹⁹ The romantics not only extolled the guilds, in contrast with the industrialization and commercialism of the liberal era, and denied that the guilds were originally monopolistic or selfish in character, they also saw in this co-operative organization of work, in the universal standards of quality and the arrangements for public inspection and control, means whereby 'handicraft was raised to the level of art'.²²⁰ As against this idealism, Sombart quite correctly observes that 'the mass of the artisans never attained to a respectable level of artistic quality' and that art production was always something different from ordinary manufacture.²²¹ Even if the guild regulations did help to improve the quality of manufactures—a quality which had nothing to do with artistic merit—to the artist such regulations were just as often a hindrance as a stimulus. Yet, as compared with the lodge, the guild, anti-liberal though it was, marked a decided step forward in the matter of the artist's freedom.

Lodge and guild differed in principle in that the former was an association of employees hierarchically organized, the latter, at least at first, an association of independent entrepreneurs on equal terms. The lodge was a single collective organization in which no one was free, not even the manager or the architect, for these, too, had to work to a plan conceived and drawn up by the Church authorities, and one in which their requirements were usually

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specified down to the details. In the individual workshops, on the other hand, of which the guild was composed, the master craftsmen were free not merely in the use of their time, but also in their choice of artistic means. The statutes, narrow-minded as they often were, normally confined themselves to technical specifications. Unlike the regulations to which the artists in the lodge had to conform, the guild had hardly touched on matters of purely artistic interest. They restricted the master's initiative, but, provided he kept within certain generally accepted limits, did not prescribe what he should or should not do. The personality of the artist as such was not yet acknowledged; his workshop was still organized in exactly the same way as that of any other tradesman; the painters did not regard membership in the same guild as the saddler as in any way derogatory. None the less, we have to recognize in the independent master craftsman of the late Middle Ages, working at his own risk and personally responsible for his work, the immediate precursor of the modern artist.²²²

Nothing shows the general trend of development during the Middle Ages more clearly than the increasing separation of the artist's place of work from the building site. In the Romanesque period the whole of the artist's work was executed upon the building itself. As far as the painter was concerned, the decoration of a church consisted exclusively of wall paintings which, naturally, had to be executed on the spot. But the plastic decoration, too, was done on the scaffolding, 'après la pose'; that is, the sculptor chiselled his stone after the mason had fixed it in the wall. With the institution of the lodge in the twelfth century, a change already noticed by Viollet-le-Duc took place in this respect. The lodge offered the sculptor a more convenient and better equipped place of work than the scaffolding had been. Now he generally does the whole of his work in a workshop near the church, the finished sculptures being subsequently built into the structure. The change was probably not so sudden as Viollet-le-Duc supposes,²²³ but, in any case, here was a development which was to lead ultimately to the independence of the sculptor's work and a growing separation of sculpture from architecture. The gradual substitution of panel paintings for wall paintings illus-

trates the same trend. Finally, the workshop becomes completely separated from the building; sculptors and painters leave the site for their own workshops and may as often as not never have seen the church whose altar-pieces and tabernacles they had been commissioned to make.

Quite a number of the stylistic characteristics of late Gothic are directly connected with this separation of the place of work from the place where the works of art are destined to be put. With the shift of art production from the building-site to the master's workshop is linked first and foremost that most strikingly modern feature of late medieval art, the bourgeois modesty and the unmonumental and unpretentious scale of its products. The bourgeoisie, in their private capacity, at first commissioned not churches or manor-houses, not chantries or series of frescoes, but tabernacles and panel pictures—however, their orders for these latter run into hundreds or even thousands. These types of art suited both the pocket of the bourgeois and his taste, and they equally suited the small-scale production of the independent artist; in the narrow space of a town workshop, with the few assistants each master had, only works of relatively small size could be attempted. The circumstances also favoured the employment, as material, of the light, cheap, easily worked wood. Whether the choice of a more modest size and a less pretentious material was the result of a change of taste, or whether the new, more flexible, more subtle and more expressive style resulted from changed materials and conditions, is hard to say. In any case, the small scale and more tractable material in itself invited innovation and inevitably assisted the transition to a style that was more expansive, more concerned to enrich and diversify the subjects depicted.²²⁴ The change from the large, the weighty and the imposing to the small, the slight and the intimate can indeed be observed not merely in the wooden figures of the altar-pieces, but also in the more monumental stone sculpture of the time; but this in no way proves that material may not have played some part in determining style—nothing would be more natural than for the style of wood-sculpture, in an age when this predominated, to be transferred to sculpture in stone. However that may be, the artistic trend shown in works of every size and

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every material is towards prettiness, delicacy and refinement. We witness the increasing conquests of modern virtuosity, of technique all too easily acquired, of resources all too readily come by and manipulated. This virtuosity, however, is in a sense only one symptom of the process which led, in this late Gothic age, to fully fledged money economy and production for sale, to the commercialization of painting and sculpture, and to the emergence of a taste that treated pictures as mere wall decoration and statues as furniture.

One may, indeed one must, be content to establish a correspondence between the history of style and the history of labour organization; it is idle to enquire which of the two is the primary and which is the secondary. Let it suffice to point out that at the end of the Middle Ages a situation is reached where immobile artists, small-scale workshops, cheap and easily handled materials, are found along with works small in size, delicate of shape, whimsical and curious in their forms.

11. THE MIDDLE-CLASS ART OF THE LATE GOTHIC PERIOD

The late Middle Ages not merely has a successful middle class—it is in fact a middle-class period. The urban money and commercial economy, which sets the course of the whole development from the end of the high Middle Ages, leads to the political and cultural independence and later to the intellectual predominance of the middle-class element. For this class represents the most progressive and productive trends in art and culture as well as in economic life. But the middle classes of the late Middle Ages form an extremely varied social pattern split up into the most diverse spheres of interest, the upper and lower limits of which are in constant flux. The former uniformity, the common economic aims and egalitarian political aspirations have now given way to an overriding tendency towards social segregation according to financial standards. Not only do the upper and the lower middle class, tradesmen and craftsmen, capitalists and labourers, become more and more sharply divided from each

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other, but numerous transitional stages arise between the strongly capitalistic employer and the small manufacturer, on the one hand, and the independent masters and the working-class proletariat, on the other. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the middle classes were still fighting for their material existence and freedom; now they are fighting for the preservation of their privileges against the new elements rising from below. From a progressive class, struggling for social justice, they have become a more or less sated, conservative class.

The unrest which had upset the stability of feudal conditions in the twelfth century and had steadily increased ever since reaches its climax in the insurrections and wage-struggles of the late Middle Ages. The whole of society has now become unsettled. The middle classes strive, satisfied and secure as they are, to emulate the prestige of the nobility and imitate the aristocratic way of life; the nobility, on the other hand, also tries to adapt itself to the profit-seeking spirit and rationalistic outlook of the middle classes. The result is a far-reaching levelling down of society; on the one hand, we have the rising middle classes, on the other, the declining aristocracy. The distance between the upper strata of the middle class and the lower, less well-to-do strata of the aristocracy is gradually reduced, but the differences in levels of wealth become more and more irreconcilable—the hatred of the poor knight for the rich burgher becomes an insuperable barrier and the conflict between the labourer deprived of civil rights and the privileged master impossible to settle.

But the structure of medieval society also shows dangerous flaws even on the highest levels; the backbone of the powerful old feudal class, with its defiant attitude to the princes, has been broken. With the transition from the natural to the money economy, the more or less independent nobility becomes the clientèle of the sovereign monarchs. The individual landowners may have become richer or poorer as a result of the dissolution of serfdom and the transformation of feudal properties into leasehold estates or farms worked by free labour, but they no longer have the men at their disposal to use in waging wars against the kings. The feudal aristocracy disappears and is replaced by a court aristocracy which derives its privileges from its position in the service

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of the king. In earlier times the princes' households were also made up of nobles, of course, but they were independent or could at any time make themselves independent of the court. The new court nobility is, however, completely dependent on the grace and favour of the king. The nobles become court officials and the court officials are ennobled. The old military nobility intermingles with the new patent nobility, and in the hybrid court and official aristocracy which they now form, it is by no means always the members of the old nobility who play the more important part. The kings prefer to choose their legal advisers and economic experts, secretaries and bankers from the middle-class elements; in making their choice, they are guided simply by the standards of personal achievement. Here, too, the guiding principles of a money economy are overriding: the ability to compete, the indifference about the means used to reach the goal, the transformation of personal into impersonal business relationships. The new state, with its tendency to absolutism, is no longer based on the loyalty of its vassals but on the material dependence of a discharged civil service and a paid standing army. This metamorphosis only becomes possible, however, after the principles of the urban money economy have been extended to the whole budget and the means have been acquired which are necessary to maintain such a costly system.

The structure of the nobility is changed along with that of the state, but it preserves its continuity with the past intact. Knighthood, on the other hand, as the exclusive warrior-class and upholder of secular culture, decays completely. The process is protracted and the ideals of chivalry do not lose their alluring splendour from one day to the next—least of all in the eyes of the middle classes. But behind the scenes everything is set for the fall of Don Quixote.—The decline of the knighthood has been connected with the new methods of warfare introduced in the late Middle Ages, and it has been pointed out that the heavily accoutred cavalry suffered a severe reverse whenever they met the infantry of the new mercenary armies or the foot of the peasant brigades. They flew from the English bowmen, the Swiss mercenaries, the Polish-Lithuanian national army—in other words, from every kind of weapon different from their own,

and from every kind of military force which did not observe their own rules of warfare. The new methods were not, however, the real reason for the defeats suffered by the knights: they were merely a symptom, for they were simply the expression of the rationalistic approach of the new middle-class world to which the knights found it impossible to accommodate themselves. The gun, the anonymity of the infantry, the strict discipline of the mass armies—all these innovations were mechanizing and rationalizing warfare and making the personal and heroic attitude of the knights out of date. The battles of Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt, Nicopolis, Varna and Sempach were not lost for technical reasons, but because the knights, instead of forming a real army, were merely incoherent, undisciplined bands of adventurers, putting personal renown above the victory of the common cause.²²⁵ The well-known thesis of the democratization of military service by the invention of firearms and the use of paid infantry, which deprived the knights of their profession, is only tenable in a limited sense. It has been rightly argued against this theory that the knights' weapons were by no means made obsolete by the introduction of the blunderbuss and the musket, quite apart from the fact that the infantry fought mostly with pikes and bows and not with firearms.²²⁶ The late Middle Ages even saw the climax in the development of the heavy armour worn by the knights, and right up to the Thirty Years War the cavalry remained a factor of often decisive importance alongside the infantry. Incidentally, it is not correct to say that the infantry was made up exclusively of men from the countryside; we also find men of the middle class and the nobility in its ranks. Knighthood became an anachronism not because its weapons, but because its 'idealism' and irrationalism had become out of date. The knight did not understand the motive forces behind the new economy, the new society and the new state; he still persisted in regarding the middle class with its money and 'narrow-minded' commercial outlook as an anomaly. The men of the middle class knew much better where they stood with the knights. It amused them to join in the masquerade of the knightly tournaments and the 'courts of love', but they treated all such activities as mere sport; in their business activities they remained

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hard-headed and free from illusions in a world which was the very opposite of chivalrous.

The middle class mixes far more with the old urban patrician families than with the feudal nobility. The 'newly rich' gradually come to be regarded as equals by the old-established patrician families and finally become completely assimilated by intermarriage. Not every rich member of the middle class is a patrician to begin with, but commoners had never moved up into the ranks of an aristocracy on account of their financial position so easily as they do now. The old urban nobility and the new capitalists share the municipal administration between them and form the new governing class, the distinguishing mark of which is that its members are qualified to be elected to the council. The families whose members have no seat there, but are regarded by those qualified to become members as of equal standing by reason of their financial status, and who can marry into patrician families, are also considered as belonging to this class. This rank of notabilities which carries on the administration of the cities directly or indirectly now forms a strictly closed class; its way of life is thoroughly aristocratic in character and its authority is based on almost as exclusive a monopoly of the offices and dignities of government as that once enjoyed by the feudal aristocracy. But the real purpose behind the ascendancy of this class is to guarantee for its members a monopoly in economic affairs. For, wherever big export business is carried on, they dominate the market if only because they alone own stocks of raw materials. They develop from tradesmen into merchants and manufacturers and now make others work for them. They simply provide the raw materials and a fixed wage for the work. The original equality of all craftsmen organized in the guilds yields to a graded differentiation according to political influence and financial means.²²⁷ First of all, the poorer masters are forced out of the greater guilds, then these, too, shut themselves off from those trying to rise from below and prevent the poorer apprentices from becoming masters. The small tradesmen gradually lose all influence on the city administration, particularly on the way economic burdens and privileges are distributed, and, in the end, they acquiesce in the lot of a dispossessed petty bourgeoisie. The

journeymen sink to the level of life-long wage earners, and, forced out of the guilds, they amalgamate into new associations of their own. Consequently, from the fourteenth century, there develops a distinct working class, excluded from the chance of ever rising in the social scale, and this class forms the basis of the new methods of production which are already very similar to those used in modern industry.²²⁸

Whether it is permissible to speak of a capitalist system in the Middle Ages depends on how one defines capitalism. If one understands by a capitalist economy the slackening of corporate ties, the gradual emergence of production from the limitations as well as from the security of the corporation, in other words, if one means simply managing and doing business on one's own account, inspired by the competitive spirit and the profit motive, then one must certainly include the high Middle Ages in the capitalist era. But if one regards this definition as inadequate and the exploitation of outside labour and the control of the labour market by those who own the means of production, in a word, the transformation of labour from a form of service into a mere commodity, as the most essential factors, then the beginnings of the age of capitalism must be dated from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to speak of a real accumulation of capital, of great wealth in the modern sense, even in the late Middle Ages, nor is it any more feasible to speak of a consistently rational economy, based entirely on the principles of efficiency, methodical planning and expediency. But the trend towards capitalism is unmistakable from this period onwards. The individualistic spirit in economic life, the gradual breakdown of the corporative principle, the depersonalization of human relationships, gain ground everywhere; however much of the full concept of capitalism remains unfulfilled, the age already bears the marks of the new economy and is dominated by the middle class, as representing the capitalist method of production.

In the high Middle Ages, the urban middle class still took no direct part in cultural life: as artists, poets and thinkers the middle-class elements were merely the agents of the clergy and nobility, merely the executants and mediators of principles not

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rooted in their own philosophy. In the late Middle Ages this situation undergoes a fundamental change; chivalric ways of life, the tastes of court society, ecclesiastical traditions, still remain in many respects the standards of middle-class art and culture, but the middle class has now become the real upholder of culture; most of the commissions for works of art are given by individuals belonging to the middle class, and no longer by kings and prelates as in the early Middle Ages, or by courts and municipalities, as in the Gothic period. It is true that the nobility and clergy do not surrender their rôle as founders of churches and builders of palaces, but their influence is no longer creative—the inspiration for new works of art now comes mostly from the middle class. The conception of art held by such a complex and divided social organism as this could naturally not be homogeneous: one must not assume, for instance, that it was absolutely in accordance with popular taste. For however differently the artistic aims and standards of the middle class developed from those of the clergy and nobility, they were not completely simple and popular, that is, immediately intelligible without any cultural background at all. The taste of a middle-class merchant may have been more ‘vulgar’, more realistic and more earthy than of a connoisseur of the high Gothic period, but it was hardly less differentiated and hardly less foreign to the simple everyday experience of the common people. The forms of late Gothic painting and sculpture created to accord with middle-class taste were often even more precious and playful than the corresponding forms in the art of the high Gothic.

Popular taste is expressed more in literature, which now, as nearly always, penetrates into lower levels of society than painting and sculpture, the products of which only wealthy people can afford to buy. Here, too, the popular element consists merely in the fact that most of the literary genres reveal less bias and less regard for the moral and aesthetic prejudices of the knightly caste, but there is no real folk poetry in any of this literature; nowhere does the unsophisticated idea of art of the common people, independent of the literary tradition of the upper classes, come into its own. The medieval fable has always been regarded by literary historians and folklore specialists as the direct

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expression of the folk spirit. According to the romantic theory, which was universally recognized as valid until quite recently, the fables originated in oral tradition and rose from the depths of the simple, unlettered folk into the sphere of literature, leaving a late and partly inaccurate deposit of the original forms created by the folk. But in reality the opposite process seems to have taken place. We do not know of any popular fables older than the *Roman de Renart*; the French, Finnish, Ukrainian stories which we possess are all derived from the literary fable, and the medieval verse fables are probably dependent on that source as well.²²⁹ But the case of the late medieval folk song is similar: it is the late descendant of the lyric verse of the troubadours and wandering scholars—a simplified and popularized form of the literary love song. It was spread abroad by the lower ranks of the minstrelsy who ‘struck up the music for the dances, sang the very songs which are usually called the folk songs of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and were also sung in chorus by the dancers themselves. . . . Much of what was being developed in the Latin poetry of the time passed into folk song through their mediation.’²³⁰ The fact that the so-called ‘folk books’ of the late Middle Ages are nothing but popular prose versions of the old courtly novels of chivalry is too well known to need stressing here. Only in one literary genre, the drama, do we find anything approaching folk poetry in the late Gothic period. Even here there is no question of the work being the original creation of the ‘folk’, but it is, at any rate, the continuation of a genuine popular tradition, transmitted since the days of the early classical age in the mime and then continued in the religious and secular drama of the Middle Ages. It is true that along with the miming tradition many themes of art-poetry, above all of Roman comedy, penetrated into the medieval theatre, but most of these themes were so deeply rooted in popular soil that the common people were for the most part merely receiving back their own cultural property. The religious theatre of the Middle Ages is, on the other hand, entirely a popular art and not only because its audience but also because the actors themselves came from all levels of society. The members of the companies are clerics, merchants, craftsmen, partly also simple members of

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the crowd, in a word, dilettanti, as opposed to the actors in the secular theatre, who are professional mimes, dancers and singers. The dilettante spirit, which was never able to make any headway in the plastic arts until recent times, made its mark in the poetry and drama of the Middle Ages in all the changes in the sociological structure of cultural life. Even the troubadours were merely dilettanti to begin with, and only gradually developed into professional poets. After the decline of courtly culture, the majority of these poets, whose livelihood was based on more or less regular employment at court, became unemployed and gradually disappeared. The middle class was for the moment neither rich nor literary-minded enough to take them all on and feed them. The place of the minstrels is now taken once again partly by amateurs who continue their ordinary civic pursuits and devote only their spare time to poetry and the drama, into which they introduce the spirit of their own craftsmanship, in fact they emphasize and exaggerate the technical elements of literary creation, as if thereby to compensate for the dilettantism which does not really fit into their solid workmanlike way of life. They unite, as do the actors in the religious drama, in guildlike organizations and subject themselves to a mass of regulations, instructions and prohibitions, which are reminiscent in many respects of the statutes of the guilds. And this workmanlike spirit is expressed not only in the poetry and drama of the non-professional dilettanti, but also in the works of those professional poets who, wholly in the spirit of craftsmanship, call themselves 'masters' and 'master-singers' and consider themselves infinitely superior to the lower ranks of the minstrelsy. They invent for themselves artificial, above all metrical difficulties, in order to put the rabble of uneducated minstrels in the shade with their virtuosity and learning. This literary poetry, which holds fast to the tradition of the already antiquated courtly-chivalric poetry both in form and content, is not only the form furthest removed from the naturalistic style of the late Gothic period, and, therefore, the least popular artistic form, but it is also the least fruitful genre of the age.

The naturalism of high Gothic art corresponded to some extent to the naturalism of Greek classicism; the depiction of reality still moved within the limits of strict forms and abstained

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from entering into details which might endanger the concentrated unity of the composition. The naturalism of the late Gothic period now explodes this formal unity just as the art of the fourth century B.C. and of Hellenism had exploded it, and concentrates on the imitation of reality with an often brutal and ruthless disregard for the formal structure. The special quality of the art of the late Middle Ages does not consist in naturalism itself, but in the discovery of the independent value and status of this naturalism, which now often contains its purpose within itself and is no longer—or no longer wholly—subservient to a symbolical and supernatural meaning. Supramundane connections are not lacking here either, but the work is in the first place a copy of nature and not a symbol using natural forms as a means serving an extraneous purpose. Nature is not yet of absolute significance in herself, but already interesting enough to be studied and depicted for her own sake. In late medieval middle-class literature, the fable and the farce, the prose novel and the short story, an absolutely secular, spicy and coarse naturalism already finds expression, in sharpest conceivable contrast to the idealism of the chivalric novels and the sublimated feelings of the aristocratic love lyric. Here for the first time, we meet with real, lifelike characters—and the supremacy of the psychological approach in literature begins to make itself felt. No doubt it is possible to find accurately observed characters even in earlier medieval literature—the ‘Divine Comedy’ is full of them—but both in the work of Dante and, for example, in that of Wolfram von Eschenbach the psychological individuality of the characters is not in the foreground, but rather their symbolical significance; they do not contain their meaning and *raison d’être* in themselves but reflect a meaning far beyond the confines of their individual existence. The main difference between the character descriptions of late medieval literature and the method of the earlier period is that the writers do not come across the peculiarities of their characters by chance, but look for them, collect them and spy them out. This psychological alertness is, however, more than anything else a product of urban life and commercialism. The concentration of many different people in one town, the richness and frequent alternation of the various types one meets day by day,

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sharpens the eye for peculiarities of character, but the real incentive of psychological observation comes from the fact that knowledge of human nature, the correct psychological assessment of one's business partner, is among the most essential requisites of the merchant. The urban and financial conditions of life which force man out of his static world of custom and tradition into a more dynamic reality, into a world of constantly changing persons and situations, also explain why man now acquires a new interest in the things of his immediate environment. For this environment is now the real scene of his life, it is within this environment that he has to prove his worth; but to do so, he must know its every detail. And thus every detail of daily life becomes an object of observation and description; not only human beings, but also animals and trees, not only living nature, but also the home and the furniture in the home, costumes and tools, become themes of artistic interest in themselves.

The man of the late medieval middle-class epoch looks out on the world with different eyes and from a different standpoint than his forefathers whose interests were confined to the next world. He stands, as it were, on the edge of a road on which colourful, inexhaustible, relentlessly onward-flowing life unfolds itself and he not only finds everything that happens there extremely interesting, but he also feels himself involved in all this life and activity. The 'travel landscape'²³¹ is the most typical pictorial theme of the age and the pilgrim procession of the Ghent altar is to a certain extent the basic form of its world-view. Again and again the art of the late Gothic period depicts the wanderer, the traveller, the walker, everywhere it tries to arouse the illusion of a journey, everywhere its characters are driven by an urge to be always on the move, always on the road.²³² The pictures pass in front of the beholder like the scenes of a constantly moving procession—and the beholder is spectator and participant at the same time. And this aspect of the 'side of the road', which eliminates the sharp division between stage and auditorium, is precisely the special, one might say the 'film-like', expression of the dynamism of the age. The spectator himself stands on the stage; the auditorium is simultaneously the scenery on the stage. Stage and auditorium, aesthetic and empirical

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reality, come into direct contact and form one continuous world: the principle of frontality has been completely abolished, the aim of artistic representation is the absolute illusion. The onlooker no longer stands over against the work of art like the inhabitant of another world, he has been drawn into the sphere of the representation himself, and this identification of the surroundings of the scene represented with the medium in which the onlooker is himself, first produces the complete illusion of space. Now, when the framework of the picture is regarded as the frame of a window through which one looks out onto the world, which induces the onlookers to regard the space in front of and behind the 'window' as one continuous medium, now for the first time the space occupied by the picture achieves depth and reality. The fact that the artist of the late Middle Ages is able to represent real space—space in our sense—an achievement beyond the powers of classical antiquity and the early Middle Ages, is due to the 'film-like' view of things produced by the new dynamic attitude of life itself. But it is, above all, this new feeling for space to which late Gothic art owes its naturalistic character. And although late medieval art still forms its illusion of space somewhat inaccurately and inconsistently, compared with the Renaissance grasp of perspective, the new feeling for reality which inspires the middle class is already manifest in this new method of representation.

Meanwhile, courtly-chivalric culture did not cease to continue exerting its influence, and not merely indirectly but in its own forms, which enjoyed a second rich blossoming in certain centres, above all at the Burgundian court. Here we can and must still speak of a courtly aristocratic culture, in contrast to the culture of the middle class. Here literature still lives and moves within the forms of the chivalric way of life and art still serves the official purposes of court society. Even the painting of the van Eycks, which strikes us as so middle-class, develops in the midst of court life and is intended for court circles and the upper middle class associated with these circles.²³³ But the remarkable thing, and this is the most striking expression of the victory of the middle-class spirit over the spirit of chivalry, is that even in court art, and indeed even in its most luxurious form, miniature

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painting, middle-class naturalism gains the upper hand. The Books of Hours produced for the Dukes of Burgundy and the Duke of Berri not only represent the beginning of the picture of manners, that is, the most bourgeois genre of painting, they form to some extent the origin of the whole of middle-class painting, extending from the portrait to landscape.²³⁴ Not only the spirit but also the outward forms of the old ecclesiastical and courtly art gradually disappear: the monumental mural painting is forced out of existence by panel painting and aristocratic book illumination by the new graphic arts. This means not only the victory of the cheaper, 'more democratic' but, at the same time, that of the more intimate, spiritually more middle-class forms. Painting first becomes independent of architecture in the shape of the panel-picture and only as such does it become part of the movable furniture of the middle-class home.

But panel painting is still the art of the well-to-do man with fastidious tastes; the art of the small folk, of the little man, if not also of the peasant and the proletariat, is the print. The woodcut and the engraving are the first popular, relatively cheap products of the fine arts. The technique of mechanical reproduction makes possible here what is obtained in literature by the use of large audiences and repeated performances. The graphic arts are the popular complement of the aristocratic art of book illumination; the illustrated broadsheets and block-books, sold at fairs and outside church doors, mean the same to the middle-class folk as the illuminated manuscripts do to the princes and magnates. The popularizing tendency in art is now so strong that the coarser and cheaper woodcut wins the day not only against the art of book illumination but also against the more refined and more expensive copperplate-engraving.²³⁵ It is hardly possible to estimate the influence of the spread of these prints on the development of modern art. But one thing is certain: if the work of art loses that magic, that 'aura' which it still possessed in the earlier Middle Ages and shows a tendency corresponding to the 'disenchantment of reality' produced by middle-class rationalism, this is also partly connected with the loss of the unique quality of the individual work of art by reproducing it mechanically.²³⁶ Another concomitant of the technique and exploitation of the print

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is the progressive depersonalization of the relationship between the public and the artist. The mechanically reproduced illustrated sheet, circulating in many copies and distributed almost exclusively by the middleman, is very much in the nature of a mere commodity, compared with the original work. And although the workshop routine of the age already tends towards the 'production of commodities' with its apprentice work and copying of originals, the print, with its many identical copies of one and the same representation, is the first perfect example of production for stock in a field where work was previously only done to order. In the fifteenth century workshops arise, in which manuscripts are copied in factory style and are illustrated with hurried pen drawings, and where the finished copies are offered for sale as in a bookshop. Even painters and sculptors begin to work for stock, and the principle of impersonal commodity-production thus comes to dominate the whole of art. For the Middle Ages, which, from the very outset, did not lay the emphasis on the personal genius of the artist but on the craftsmanship involved in artistic creation, the mechanization of production was not so difficult to reconcile with the nature of art as it is for the modern age and as it would have been for the Renaissance if the medieval tradition of craftsmanship in art had not kept its conception of genius within comparatively narrow bounds.

CHAPTER V

RENAISSANCE, MANNERISM, BAROQUE

1. THE CONCEPT OF THE RENAISSANCE

HOW arbitrary the usual distinction between the Middle Ages and the modern age is and how fluid the concept of the 'Renaissance' is best shown by the difficulty there is in assigning such personalities as Petrarch and Boccaccio, Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello, Jean Fouquet and Jan van Eyck, to one or other of these categories. If one likes, one can even consider Dante and Giotto as belonging to the Renaissance and Shakespeare and Molière to the Middle Ages. In any case, the idea that the real turning-point does not occur until the eighteenth century and that the modern age really begins with the enlightenment, with the idea of progress and with industrialization, is not to be lightly dismissed.¹ But it will probably be best to place the crucial dividing-line between the first and second half of the Middle Ages, that is to say, at the end of the twelfth century, when money economy comes to life again, the new towns arise and the modern middle class first acquires its distinctive characteristics—it would be quite wrong to place it in the fifteenth century, in which, it is true, a number of things come to fruition but as good as nothing absolutely new begins. Our naturalistic and scientific conception of the world is certainly in essentials a creation of the Renaissance, but it was medieval nominalism that first inspired the new direction of thought in which this conception of the world has its origin. The interest in the individual object, the search for natural law, the sense of fidelity to nature in art and literature—these things do not by any means begin only with the Renaissance. The naturalism of the fifteenth century is merely the continuation of the naturalism of the Gothic period

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in which the individual conception of individual things already begins to be clearly manifest. And if those who sing the praises of the Renaissance profess to see in all the spontaneous, progressive and personalist tendencies of the Middle Ages a heralding or a proto-form of the Renaissance, if for Burckhardt even the songs of the wandering scholars are proto-Renaissance and Walter Pater sees an expression of the Renaissance spirit in such an absolutely medieval creation as the chante-fable 'Aucassin and Nicolette', then this conception only sheds light on the same state of affairs, the same continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, from the opposite angle.

In his description of the Renaissance, Burckhardt laid the greatest stress on the naturalism of the period, and represented the turning to empirical reality, 'the discovery of the world and of man', as the most fundamental factor in the 'rebirth'. In so doing, he, like most of his successors, failed to see that in the art of the Renaissance not naturalism in itself but merely the scientific, methodical, totalitarian character of naturalism was new, and that not the observation and analysis of reality, but merely the conscious deliberation and consistency with which the criteria of reality were registered and analysed were in advance of medieval conceptions—that the remarkable thing about the Renaissance was, to put it briefly, not the fact that the artist became an observer of nature, but that the work of art became a 'study of nature'. The naturalism of the Gothic period began when pictures and sculpture ceased being exclusively symbols, and began to acquire purpose and value as mere reproductions of the things of this world, apart from their connection with transcendental reality. The sculptures of Chartres and Rheims, obvious as their supernatural relationships are, differ from the art of the Romanesque period by reason of their immanent purpose, which is separable from their metaphysical significance. On the other hand, the real change brought about by the Renaissance is that metaphysical symbolism loses its strength and the artist's aim is limited more and more definitely and consciously to the representation of the empirical world. The more society and economic life emancipate themselves from the fetters of ecclesiastical dogma the more freely does art turn to the consideration of

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immediate reality; but naturalism is no more a new creation of the Renaissance than the acquisitive economy.

The Renaissance discovery of nature was an invention of nineteenth-century liberalism which played off the Renaissance delight in nature against the Middle Ages, in order to strike a blow at the romantic philosophy of history. For when Burckhardt says that the 'discovery of the world and of man' was an achievement of the Renaissance, this thesis is, at the same time, an attack on romantic reaction and an attempt to ward off the propaganda designed to spread the romantic view of medieval culture. The doctrine of the spontaneous naturalism of the Renaissance comes from the same source as the theory that the fight against the spirit of authority and hierarchy, the ideal of freedom of thought and freedom of conscience, the emancipation of the individual and the principle of democracy, are achievements of the fifteenth century. In all this the light of the modern age is contrasted with the darkness of the Middle Ages.

The connection between the concept of the Renaissance and the ideology of liberalism is even more striking in the work of Michelet, who coined the slogan of the 'découverte du monde et de l'homme',² than in that of Burckhardt. Even the way he chooses his heroes, and brings together Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare and Cervantes with Columbus, Copernicus, Luther and Calvin,³ his characterization of Brunelleschi, for instance, as the destroyer of the Gothic and his conception of the Renaissance in general as the beginning of a development which finally secures the victory for the idea of freedom and reason, shows that the main interest in his analysis is to establish the genealogy of liberalism. He is concerned with the same struggle against clericalism and intellectual authoritarianism which made the enlightened philosophers of the eighteenth century conscious of their opposition to the Middle Ages and of their affinity with the Renaissance. For both Bayle (*Dict. hist. et crit.*, IV) as well as Voltaire (*Essai sur les mœurs et l'esprit des nations*, chap. 121) the irreligious character of the Renaissance was a foregone conclusion, and the Renaissance has remained encumbered with this feature until our own day, although it was in reality merely anti-clerical, anti-scholastic and anti-ascetic, but in no sense sceptical. The ideas about salva-

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tion, the other world, redemption and original sin, which filled the whole spiritual life of medieval man, became, it is true, merely 'secondary ideas',⁴ but there can be no question of an absence of all religious feeling in the Renaissance. For if, as Ernst Walser remarks, 'one tries to inquire into the life and thought of the leading personalities of the Quattrocento, a Coluccio Salutati, Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, Lorenzo Valla, Lorenzo Magnifico or Luigi Pulci, inductively, then the result will always be that, strangely enough, the established characteristics of scepticism are absolutely inapplicable to them. . . .'⁵ The Renaissance was not even so hostile to authority as the enlightenment and liberalism asserted. Clerics were attacked, but the Church as an institution was spared, and as its authority diminished it was replaced by that of classical antiquity.

The radicalism of the eighteenth-century rationalist conception of the Renaissance was markedly intensified by the spirit of the fight for freedom in the middle of the last century.⁶ The struggle against reaction renewed the memory of the Italian republics of the Renaissance and suggested the idea of connecting the splendour of their culture with the emancipation of their citizens.⁷ In France it was anti-Napoleonic, in Italy anti-clerical journalism which helped to give final point to and spread the liberal conception of the Renaissance,⁸ and both middle-class liberal, as well as socialistic historians have adhered to this conception. Even today, the Renaissance is still celebrated in both camps as Reason's great war of liberation and as the triumph of individualism,⁹ whereas in reality the idea of 'free research' was not an achievement of the Renaissance,¹⁰ nor was the idea of personality absolutely foreign to the Middle Ages; the individualism of the Renaissance was new only as a conscious programme, as a weapon and a war-cry, not as a phenomenon in itself.

In his definition of the Renaissance, Burckhardt combines the idea of individualism with that of sensualism, the idea of the self-determination of the personality with the emphasis on the protest against medieval asceticism, the glorification of nature with the proclamation of the gospel of the joy of life and the 'emancipation of the flesh'. Out of this association of ideas there arises,

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partly under the influence of Heine's romantic immoralism and as an anticipation of Nietzsche's a-moral hero-worship,¹¹ the well-known picture of the Renaissance as an era of unscrupulous brutes and epicures—a picture the libertine features of which are, perhaps, not directly related to the liberal conception of the Renaissance, but which would be inconceivable without the liberal trend and individualistic approach of the nineteenth century. The discomfort with the world of middle-class morality and the revolt against it produced the exuberant paganism which tried to find a substitute for pleasures beyond its grasp by depicting the excesses of the Renaissance. In this picture, the condottiere with his demonic lust for pleasure and unbridled will to power was the stock figure of the irresistible sinner, who committed, as a proxy, all the monstrosities conjured up in the middle-class day-dreams of the happy life. It has been asked, justifiably, whether this infamous brute, as described in the histories of Renaissance morals, ever existed at all in reality, and whether this 'wicked tyrant' was ever anything more than the result of memories derived from the classical reading of the humanists.¹²

The sensualistic conception of the Renaissance is based more on the psychology of the nineteenth century than on that of the Renaissance itself. The aestheticism of the romantic movement was far more than a cult of the artist and of art; it led to a revaluation of all the great questions of life according to aesthetic standards. All reality became the substratum of an artistic experience and life itself a work of art, in which every element was merely a stimulus of the senses. This aesthetic philosophy characterized the alleged sinners, tyrants and villains of the Renaissance as great picturesque figures—the fitting protagonists for the colourful background of the age. The generation which, drunk with beauty and longing for disguise, wanted to die 'with vine-leaves in the hair' was only too ready to exalt a historical epoch which clothed itself in gold and purple, which turned life into a gorgeous feast, and in which, as this generation desired to believe, even the simple folk delighted enthusiastically in the most exquisite works of art. The historical reality was, of course, no more in accordance with this aesthete's dream than

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with the picture of the superman in tyrant's form. The Renaissance was hard and business-like, matter-of-fact and unromantic; in this respect, too, it was not so very different from the late Middle Ages.

The characteristics of the individualistic-liberal and of the sensualistic conception of the Renaissance apply only in part to the actual Renaissance, and almost as much as they apply to it, they also apply to the late Middle Ages. The frontier here seems to be more geographical and national than purely historical. In the problematical cases—as for instance in that of Pisanello or the van Eycks—as a rule, one will assign southern phenomena to the Renaissance and northern phenomena to the Middle Ages. The spacious representations of Italian art, with their freely moving figures and the spatial unity of their settings, seem to be Renaissance in character, whilst the impression made by the confined spaces of Old Netherlandish painting, with its timid, somewhat awkward figures, its laboriously assembled accessories and its delicate miniature technique, is wholly medieval. But even if one is prepared to grant a certain relevance here to the constant factors of evolution, particularly the racial and national character of the groups which make the decisive contribution to the culture of the age, one should not forget that in so far as one accepts the validity of such factors one thereby abdicates as a historian, and one should strive to postpone the moment of such resignation as far as possible. For usually it turns out that the allegedly constant factors in evolution are merely the outcome of stages in the historical development or the premature substitute for hitherto unexplored but thoroughly explorable historical conditions. At any rate, the individual character of races and nations has a different significance in the different epochs of history. In the Middle Ages it has hardly any importance at all; in that age the great collective of Christendom has an incomparably higher degree of reality than the separate national individualities. But at the end of the Middle Ages the place of the universal Western feudal system and of international chivalry, of the universal Church and its uniform culture, is taken by the nationally and civically patriotic middle class with its economic and social forms subject to local conditions, by the narrowly confined spheres of

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interest of the towns and countrysides, by the particularism of the territorial principalities and the variety of national languages. The national and racial elements now come more strongly into the foreground of the picture as differentiating factors, and the Renaissance appears to be the particular form in which the Italian national spirit emancipates itself from universal European culture.

The most striking feature of the art of the Quattrocento is, in contrast both to that of the Middle Ages and that of Northern Europe, the extraordinary freedom and effortlessness of expression, the grace and elegance, the statuesque weight and the great, impetuous line of its forms. Everything here is bright and serene, rhythmical and melodious. The stiff and measured solemnity of medieval art disappears and gives place to a vivid, clear, well-articulated formal idiom, beside which even the contemporary Franco-Burgundian art seems to have 'a mood of fundamental gloom, a barbaric splendour, and bizarre and overlaid forms'.¹³ With its lively feeling for important and simple relationships, for limitation and order, for monumental forms and firm structures, the Quattrocento anticipates, in spite of occasional harshnesses and an often unchecked playfulness, the stylistic principles of the high Renaissance. And it is precisely the immanence of the 'classical' element in this pre-classical art, which distinguishes the style of the early Italian Renaissance most incisively from late medieval art and the contemporary art of Northern Europe. The 'ideal style', which connects Giotto with Raphael, dominates the art of Masaccio and Donatello, Andrea del Castagno and Piero della Francesca, Signorelli and Perugino; probably not a single Italian artist of the early Renaissance entirely escapes its influence. The basic element in this conception of art is the principle of uniformity and the power of the total effect, or at least the tendency towards uniformity and the striving, despite all the fullness of detail and colour, to make a total impression. Seen beside the artistic creations of the later Middle Ages, a work of the Renaissance always seems to be an unbroken and perfect whole, and, however rich its content, fundamentally simple and homogeneous.

The basic form of Gothic art is juxtaposition. Whether the

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individual work is made up of several comparatively independent parts or is not analysable into such parts, whether it is a pictorial or a plastic, an epic or a dramatic representation, it is always the principle of expansion and not of concentration, of co-ordination and not of subordination, of the open sequence and not of the closed geometric form, by which it is dominated. The beholder is, as it were, led through the stages and stations of a journey, and the picture of reality which it reveals is like a panoramic survey, not a one-sided, unified representation, dominated by a single point of view. In painting it is the 'continuous' method which is favoured; the drama strives to make the episodes as complete as possible and prefers, instead of the concentration of the action in a few decisive situations, frequent changes of scene, of the characters and the motifs. The important thing in Gothic art is not the subjective viewpoint, not the creative, formative will expressed in the mastering of the material, but the thematic material itself, of which both artists and public can never see enough. Gothic art leads the onlooker from one detail to another and causes him, as has been well said, to 'unravel' the successive parts of the work one after the other; the art of the Renaissance, on the other hand, does not allow him to linger on any detail, to separate any single element from the whole composition, but forces him rather to grasp all the parts at one and the same time.¹⁴ Just like central perspective in painting, the spatially and temporally concentrated scene in the drama makes it possible to realize this simultaneity of vision. The change that takes place in the conception of space, and therefore in the whole conception of art, is perhaps expressed most strikingly in the fact that the stage scenery based on separate unconnected settings is suddenly felt to be incompatible with artistic illusion.¹⁵ The Middle Ages, which thought of space as something synthetic and analysable, not only allowed the different scenes of a drama to be set up alongside one another, but allowed the actors to remain on the stage even when they were not taking part in the action. For just as the audience simply did not take any notice of the scenery in front of which no acting was taking place, so they took no notice either of the actors who were not engaged in the scene being played. To the Renaissance, such divided attention seems

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impossible to justify. The change of outlook is probably expressed most clearly by Scaliger, who finds it quite ludicrous that the 'characters never leave the stage, and those who are silent are regarded as not present'.¹⁶ For the new conception of art, the work forms an indivisible unity; the spectator wants to be able to take in the whole range of the stage with a single glance, just as he grasps the whole space of a painting organized on the principles of central perspective, with a single glance.¹⁷ But the development from a successive to a simultaneous conception of art implies, at the same time, a lessened appreciation of those silently accepted 'rules of the game' on which, in the final analysis, every artistic illusion is based. For, if the Renaissance regards it as nonsensical 'to behave on the stage as if one could not hear what one person is saying about another',¹⁸ although the persons in question are standing next to each other, this can perhaps be described as a symptom of a more highly developed naturalistic approach, but it also no doubt implies a certain atrophy of the power of imagination. However that may be, the art of the Renaissance owes the impression of totality, that is to say, the appearance of a genuine, self-dependent, autonomous world, and with that its greater truth as compared with the Middle Ages, above all, to this uniformity of the artistic presentation. For the genuineness of the description of reality, its trustworthiness and power to convince, is here, as so often, dependent on the inner logic of the approach, on the mutual conformity of the elements of the work, to a greater extent than on the conformity of these elements with the external reality.

With the principles of unity which inspire its art, Italy anticipates the classicism of the Renaissance, just as it anticipates the capitalistic development of the West with its economic rationalism. For the early Renaissance is an essentially Italian movement, as opposed to the High Renaissance and mannerism, which are universal European movements. The new artistic culture first appears on the scene in Italy, because this country also has a lead over the West in economic and social matters, because the revival of economic life starts here, the financial and transport facilities of the crusades are organized from here,¹⁹ free competition first develops here, in opposition to the guild ideal of the Middle Ages,

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and the first European banking system arises here,²⁰ because the emancipation of the urban middle class takes place here earlier than in the rest of Europe, because from the very outset feudalism and chivalry are less developed here than in the North and the rural aristocracy not only have town residences very early on, but adapt themselves absolutely to the urban financial aristocracy, and no doubt also because the tradition of classical antiquity was never entirely lost in this country where classical remains are to be seen everywhere. It is well known what importance has been attributed precisely to this last factor in the theories on the origins of the Renaissance. What could have been simpler than to trace back the beginnings of this new style to one uniform, direct, external influence? But it was forgotten that an outside historical influence is never the ultimate reason for an intellectual revolution, for such an influence can only become effective if the preconditions for its reception are already in existence; what has to be explained is, in fact, why such an influence becomes of importance at a particular time, it cannot in itself explain the topical importance of the phenomena by which it is accompanied. If, therefore, from a certain point in time classical antiquity began to have a different influence from that which it had previously, the first question that must be asked is, why this change really took place, why a different attitude was taken all at once to the same thing; but this question is hardly to be answered any more easily or in stricter terms than the original question, namely why and wherein the Renaissance differed from the Middle Ages. The re-assimilation of classical antiquity was merely a symptom; it had social presuppositions, like the rejection of classical antiquity at the beginning of the Christian era. But we must not overrate the symptomatic importance of this re-assimilation. It is true that the protagonists of the Renaissance themselves had the epochal consciousness of a rebirth and a sense of the revitalizing spirit of classical antiquity—but the Trecento had already had this feeling.²¹ Now instead of, therefore, claiming Dante and Petrarch for the Renaissance, we shall do better to investigate, as the opponents of the classical theory have done, the medieval origins of the idea of rebirth, working out the continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

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The best-known protagonists of the theory of the medieval origins of the Renaissance represent the Franciscan movement as the decisive influence, establish a connection between the lyrical sensibility, the feeling for nature and the individualism of Dante and Giotto in particular, then of the later masters as well, and the subjectivism and inwardness of the new religious spirit. They deny that the 'discovery' of the antiquity in the fifteenth century caused a break in a development for which the way had already been prepared.²² Reference has also been made to the connection between the Renaissance and the Christian culture of the Middle Ages and the directness of the transition from the Middle Ages to modern times from quite different presuppositions. Konrad Burdach describes the so-called fundamental streak of paganism in the Renaissance as a fairy-tale,²³ and Carl Neumann not only maintains that the Renaissance is based 'on the enormous powers created by Christian education', that the individualism and realism of the fifteenth century were 'the last word to be spoken by medieval man in his full maturity', but also that the imitation of classical art and literature, which had already led to the stagnation of culture in Byzantium, was also more of a hindrance than a help in the Renaissance.²⁴ Louis Courajod goes so far, indeed, as to deny all inner connection between the Renaissance and classical antiquity, and represents the Renaissance as the spontaneous revival of Franco-Flemish Gothic art.²⁵ But even these scholars, who are aware of the direct continuation of the Middle Ages in the Renaissance, do not recognize that the relationship between the two epochs is grounded in the continuity of their economic and social development, that the Franciscan spirit, emphasized by Thode, the medieval individualism, emphasized by Neumann, and the naturalism, emphasized by Courajod, have their origin in that social dynamism which changes the face of Western Europe at the end of the medieval period of natural economy.

The Renaissance deepens the influence of this medieval development with its striving towards the capitalistic economic and social system only in so far as it confirms the rationalism which now dominates the whole intellectual and material life of the time. The principles of unity which now become authorita-

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tive in art, the unification of space and the unified standards of proportions, the restriction of the artistic representation to one single theme and the concentration of the composition into one immediately intelligible form, are also in accordance with this new rationalism. They express the same dislike for the incalculable and the uncontrollable as the economy of the same period with its emphasis on planning, expediency and calculability; they are creations of the same spirit which makes its way in the organization of labour, in trading methods, the credit system and double-entry book-keeping, in methods of government, in diplomacy and warfare.²⁶ The whole development of art becomes part of the total process of rationalization. The irrational ceases to make any deeper impression. The things that are now felt as 'beautiful' are the logical conformity of the individual parts of a whole, the arithmetically definable harmony of the relationships and the calculable rhythm of a composition, the exclusion of discords in the relation of the figures to the space they occupy and in the mutual relationships of the various parts of the space itself. And just as central perspective is space seen from a mathematical standpoint, and right proportions are only equivalent to the systematic organization of the individual forms in a picture, so in the course of time all criteria of artistic quality are subjected to rational scrutiny and all the laws of art are rationalized. This rationalism does not remain by any means restricted to Italian art; but in the North it assumes more trivial characteristics than in Italy, it becomes more obvious, more naïve. A typical example of this new conception of art outside Italy is the London Madonna by Robert Campin, in the background of which the upper edge of a fire-screen also serves to form the Virgin's halo. The painter uses a formal coincidence to bring an irrational and unreal element of the picture into conformity with everyday experience, and although he is perhaps just as firmly convinced of the supernatural reality of the halo as he is of the natural reality of the fire-screen, the mere fact that he thinks he can increase the attraction of his work by the naturalistic motivation of this phenomenon is the sign of a new, although not unheralded epoch.

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2. THE DEMAND FOR MIDDLE-CLASS AND COURTLY ART IN THE QUATTROCENTO

The art public of the Renaissance consists of the urban middle class and the court society of the residences. The trends of taste represented by these two circles have many points of contact despite their different origins. On the one hand, the courtly elements of the Gothic style have an after-effect in middle-class art and with the revival of the chivalric ways of life, which had never entirely lost their powers of attraction on the lower classes, the middle class adopts new forms of art governed by the taste of the courts; on the other hand, court society, too, finds it impossible to keep aloof from the realism and rationalism of the middle class and it participates in the formation of a conception of the world and of art, which has its origin in urban life. At the end of the Quattrocento the urban middle-class and the chivalric-romantic directions in art are so intermingled that even such a thoroughly middle-class art as the Florentine assumes a more or less courtly character. But this phenomenon is merely in keeping with the general trend and simply marks the way leading from urban democracy to princely absolutism.

As early as the eleventh century small maritime republics like Venice, Amalfi, Pisa and Genoa arise, independent of the feudal lords of the surrounding territories. In the following centuries further free communities are constituted—amongst others, Milan, Lucca, Florence and Verona, still forming socially somewhat undifferentiated commonwealths, based on the equal rights of their trading citizens. Soon, however, the conflict breaks out between these communities and the rich barons in their neighbourhood and ends for the moment with the victory of the middle class. The country aristocracy moves into the towns and tries to adapt itself to the economic and social structure of the urban population. But almost at the same time another conflict begins which is waged much more ruthlessly and is not settled so soon. It is the twofold class struggle between the upper and the lower middle class, on the one hand, and between the proletariat and the middle class as a whole, on the other. The urban population, which was still united in the struggle against the common

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enemy, the nobility, splits up, now the enemy seems to be vanquished, into different parties and engages in the most bitter strife. At the end of the twelfth century the primitive democracies became military autocracies. We do not exactly know what the cause of this development was, and cannot say definitely whether it was the feuds of fractions of the aristocracy raging furiously against each other or the struggles within the middle class, or perhaps both these phenomena together, which made necessary the appointment of the *podestà*, as an authority standing above the contending parties; at any rate, a period of party warfare was followed everywhere sooner or later by despotisms. The despots themselves were either members of local dynasties, such as the Este in Ferrara, imperial governors, such as the Visconti in Milan, condottieri, such as Francesco Sforza, the successor of the Visconti, nepots like the Riario in Forlì and the Farnese in Parma, or distinguished citizens like the Medici in Florence, the Bentivogli in Bologna and the Baglioni in Perugia. As early as the thirteenth century despotic government became hereditary in many places; in other places, especially in Florence and Venice, the old republican constitution was preserved at least in form, but the old freedom declined everywhere along with the institution of the *signoria*. The free civic community became an antiquated political form.²⁷ The townspeople had become unaccustomed to military service owing to their absorption in economic affairs and had left warfare to military entrepreneurs and professional soldiers, to the condottieri and their hirelings. The *signori* are everywhere the direct or indirect commanders of the troops.²⁸

The development of the situation in Florence is typical of all the Italian cities in which, for the present, no dynastic solution is found and where, to begin with, no court life develops. It is not as if a capitalistic economy appeared here any earlier than in many other cities, but the separate stages of capitalistic development are more distinct here and the motives behind the class struggles which accompany this development more evident than elsewhere.²⁹ It is the process by which the upper middle class seizes power over the state through the medium of the guilds and the way it exploits this power to increase its economic

superiority which can be followed more exactly in Florence than in other communities with a similar structure. After the death of Frederick II and with the Guelphs to protect them, the guilds come to power in the community and snatch the reins of government from the *podestà*. The *primo popolo* is formed—‘the first consciously illegal and revolutionary political association’³⁰—and elects its *capitan*. Formally, he is subordinate to the *podestà*, but in actual fact he is the most influential official in the state; he has not only the whole militia at his disposal, he not only has the final word in all difficult questions of taxation, but he also exercises ‘a kind of tribunitial right to assist and inspect’ in all cases where a charge of violence is brought against a member of the nobility.³¹ With that the power of the military families is broken and the feudal aristocracy forced out of the government of the republic. It is the first decisive victory of the middle class in modern history, an event which reminds one of the victory of Greek democracy over the tyrannies. The nobility succeeds in seizing power again after about ten years, but the bourgeoisie only needs now to swim with the tide of events, for this carries it above the stormy waves again and again. At the end of the sixties there already begins the first alliance between the financial and the hereditary aristocracy, and that prepares the way for the rule of that plutocratic upper class which remains in control during the later history of Florence.

Around the year 1200 the upper middle class is already in full possession of the power which it exercises in essentials through the agency of the guild Priors. The latter control the whole political and administrative machine and since they are, formally at any rate, representatives of the guilds, Florence can be described as a guild city.³² In the meantime the economic corporations had become ‘political guilds’. All positive civic rights are now based on membership of the legally recognized corporations. Anyone who does not belong to a professional organization is not a fully qualified citizen. The magnates are excluded from the office of the guild Priors unless they take up a civic profession or trade or at least become formal members of a guild. That does not mean, however, that all full citizens have equal rights; the rule of the guilds is based on the dictatorship of the capitalistic

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middle class united in the seven greater guilds. We do not know how the different ranks arose among the guilds. When the documentation of Florentine economic history begins, the differentiation is already a *fait accompli*.³³ Economic conflicts do not break out here, as in most German cities, between the guilds, on the one side, and the unorganized urban patriciate, on the other, but between the various groups within the guilds themselves.³⁴ In Florence the patriciate has the advantage over the North from the very beginning in that it is just as rigidly organized as the lower sections of the urban population. Its guilds, in which the wholesale trade, big industry and banking are united, develop into real employers' associations, pooling their resources. But the preponderance of these guilds enables the upper bourgeoisie to use the whole machinery of guild organization to keep down the lower classes, and above all to reduce wages.

The fourteenth century is full of the class struggles between the middle class which controls the guilds and the workers who had been forced out of them. The wage-earning class was hit worst of all by the prohibition of any coalition to protect their interests and by the qualification of any kind of strike movement as a revolutionary act. The worker is here the subject of a class state and finds himself completely deprived of all civil rights. In this state capital rules more ruthlessly and less troubled by moral scruples than ever before or after in the history of Western Europe.³⁵ The situation was all the more hopeless in that there was no awareness of the fact that a class struggle was in progress, no understanding of the proletariat as a social class, and the propertyless wage-earners being described as the 'poor' 'which are always with us in any case'. The economic boom, which is partly due to this suppression of the working class, reaches its climax in the years 1328-38; then the bankruptcy of the Bardi and Peruzzi follows and leads to a serious financial crisis and general stagnation. The oligarchy suffers an apparently irreparable loss of prestige and has to submit first to the despotism of the 'Duke of Athens', then to a popular, essentially petty bourgeois government—the first of its kind in Florence. The writers and poets side again, as once in Athens, with the old ruling class—Boccaccio and Villani are examples—and speak in the most contemptuous tones

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of the ruling shopkeepers and craftsmen. The forty years which now follow, and which extend to the crushing of the *ciompi* revolt, form the only really democratic period in the history of Florence—a short intermezzo between two long epochs of plutocracy. Of course, even in this period it is only the will of the middle class that gains authority—the broad masses of the working class are still forced to have recourse to strikes and revolts. The *ciompi* revolt of 1378 is the only one of these revolutionary movements of which we have more exact knowledge, and it is also, in any case, the most important one. Now for the first time the basic conditions of economic democracy are realized. The common people drive away the guild Priors, create three new guilds representing the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, and set up a popular government which proceeds first of all to redistribute the burden of taxation. The revolt, which is fundamentally a rising of the fourth estate and which strives to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat,³⁶ is suppressed only two months after its start by the moderate elements in alliance with the upper bourgeoisie, but it secures active participation in the government for the lower classes of the population for another three years. The history of this period does not merely prove that the interests of the proletariat were incompatible with those of the bourgeoisie, but shows what a serious error it was on the part of the working class to want to accomplish the revolutionary change in methods of production in the framework of the already out-of-date guild organization.³⁷ The wholesale trade and big industry recognized much more quickly that the guilds had become an institution obstructing progress and tried to rid themselves of them. Subsequently more and more purely cultural and less and less political tasks were assigned to them, until they finally fell completely victim to free competition.

After the suppression of the people's government the position was the same as before the *ciompi* revolt. The 'popolo grasso' was in power again, the only difference being that its power was exercised no longer by the whole class, but only by a few rich families, and it was no longer in serious danger of being challenged. Wherever a subversive movement crops up in the following century endangering the upper class even in the slightest

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degrec, it is immediately suppressed without any trouble.³⁸ After the comparatively short reign of the Alberti, Capponi, Uzzano, Albizzi and their followers, the Medici take over the reins of power. From now onwards there is even less justification for speaking of a democracy than before, when, it is true, only a part even of the middle class had been in possession of positive political rights and economic privileges, but the rule of this class had been conducted, at least within its own ranks, with a certain justice and, on the whole, unobjectionable methods. Under the Medici even this already very limited democracy is undermined from within and bereft of its whole purpose. Now, if the interests of the ruling class are at stake, the constitution is no longer altered, but simply abused, the ballot-boxes are falsified, the officials bribed or intimidated, the guild Priors pushed about hither and thither like mere puppets. What is called 'democracy' here is the unofficial dictatorship of the chiefs of a family firm, who proclaim themselves simple citizens and hide behind the impersonal forms of a bogus republic. In the year 1433 Cosimo, oppressed by his rivals, has to go into exile—an event well known in Florentine history; but after his return in the following year he exercises his power again completely unimpeded. He allows himself to be elected to the position of Gonfaloniere for two months, after having already previously filled this office on two occasions; his whole period of office, therefore, covers six months. He rules behind the scenes, through his stooges, and controls the city without any particular official title and dignity, without authority, by purely illegal methods. Consequently, as early as the fifteenth century, the oligarchy is followed in Florence by a disguised principate from which the real principality later develops quite smoothly.³⁹ The fact that, in their struggle against their rivals, the Medici unite with the petty bourgeoisie does not bring about any fundamental change in the position of this class. However patriarchal the forms in which it clothes itself, the rule of the Medici is in essence still more partisan and arbitrary than the government of the whole oligarchy. The state still represents merely private interests; the 'democracy' of Cosimo consists only in the fact that he lets others rule for him and uses fresh young talent whenever possible.⁴⁰

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Despite the fact that calm and stability were merely forced on the majority of the population, from the beginning of the fifteenth century a new period of economic prosperity began for Florence, which was not interrupted during Cosimo's lifetime by any crisis worth speaking of. There were occasional stoppages of work here and there, but they were insignificant and of short duration. Florence attains the summit of its economic potential. Sixteen thousand pieces of cloth reach Venice from Florence every year; the Florentine export merchants also use the port of conquered Pisa for this purpose, and from 1421, the port of Livorno which had been acquired for 100,000 florins. It is understandable that Florence was elated with victory and that the ruling class, which profited from the various acquisitions, wanted, like the middle class in Athens of old, to show its power and riches. From 1425 Ghiberti works on the splendid East portal of the Baptistry; in the year in which the port of Livorno is acquired, Brunelleschi is commissioned to carry out his project of building a dome over the Cathedral. The idea is to make Florence a second Athens. The Florentine merchants become insolent and presumptuous, they want to make themselves independent of foreign countries, and set up an autarchy, that is, increase home consumption in accordance with rising production.⁴¹

The original structure of capitalism had undergone some fundamental changes in Italy in the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In the place of the primitive striving after profit, the idea of expediency, calculation and planning came to the fore, and the rationalism which was a more or less dominant feature of profit economy from the very outset now became absolute. The enterprising spirit of the pioneers lost its romantic, adventurous, piratical character and the conqueror became an organizer and an accountant, a carefully calculating merchant, managing his business with prudent circumspection. It was not the principle of expediency in itself that was new in the economic life of the Renaissance, nor the mere readiness to give up traditional methods of production as soon as a better and more appropriate method was discovered, but the consistency with which tradition was sacrificed to rationality and the ruthlessness with which all the resources of economic life were put to practical

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use and turned into an item in the ledger. This absolute rationalization first made possible the solution of the problems which arose from the increase in goods traffic. The raising of the output demanded a more intensive exploitation of the available labour, a progressive division of labour and the gradual mechanization of labour methods, by which is to be understood not merely the introduction of machines, but also the depersonalization of human work, the valuation of the worker purely in terms of the output achieved. Nothing expresses the economic philosophy of this new age more trenchantly than precisely this materialist approach, which estimates a man according to his achievement and the output according to its value in money—the wage—which, in other words, turns the worker into a mere link in a complicated system of investments and financial yields, of risks of profit and loss, of assets and liabilities. But the rationalism of the age is expressed, above all, in the fact that the essentially artisan quality of the earlier urban economy now becomes more or less thoroughly commercialized. And this commercialization does not consist merely in the fact that the manual element in the activity of the business man gradually recedes and the calculating and speculative element gets the upper hand,⁴² but also in the recognition of the principle that the business man need not necessarily create new goods to create new values. The outstanding characteristic of the new economic philosophy is the understanding which it reveals for the fictive, changeable nature of the market price, its dependence on circumstances of the moment, its appreciation of the fact that the value of a commodity is by no means constant, but perpetually fluctuating, and that its standards depend not on the good or bad will of the merchant, but on objective economic circumstances. As the concept of the ‘just price’ and the scruples concerning interest show, in the Middle Ages value was regarded as a substantial quality, inherent in the commodity and fixed once and for all; it was not until economic activity was commercialized that the real criteria, the relativity and the morally indifferent character of value were discovered.

The capitalistic spirit of the Renaissance consists in the profit-motive and the so-called ‘middle-class virtues’, acquisitiveness and industry, frugality and respectability.⁴³ But even this new

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morality is only another expression of the universal process of rationalization. It is characteristic of the bourgeois that even when he is apparently concerned merely with his prestige, he follows the principles of rational utility, that by respectability he understands business solidity and a sound reputation and that in his language fidelity means solvency. Not until the second half of the Quattrocento do the principles of rational conduct yield to the ideal of the *rentier*. It is only then that the life of the bourgeoisie assumes seigniorial features. The development takes place in three stages. In the 'heroic age of capitalism' the business man appears, above all, in the guise of the ruthless conqueror, the self-dependent daring adventurer who has outgrown the relative security of medieval economy. The middle class still fights with real weapons in its hands against the hostile aristocracy, the rival urban communities and the inhospitable seaports. When these conflicts come to a partial standstill, and the safer organization of goods traffic allows and demands a more systematic and more intensive development of production, the romantic features gradually disappear from the character of the bourgeois; he subjects his whole existence to a logical and methodical plan. But as soon as he feels economically secure, the discipline of his middle-class morality is slackened and he succumbs with growing satisfaction to the ideals of leisure and the beautiful life. He tends towards an irrational way of life precisely at the same time as the now financially-minded princes are beginning to adapt themselves to the business principles of the solid, trustworthy and solvent merchant.⁴⁴ The circles of court and middle-class society thus meet half-way. The princes become more and more progressive and prove themselves just as advanced in their cultural efforts as the newly-rich middle class; the middle class, on the other hand, becomes more and more conservative and favours an art in which a return is made to the courtly-chivalric, Gothic-spiritualistic ideals of the Middle Ages, or, rather, these ideals, which had never entirely disappeared from middle-class art, now come back into prominence again.

Giotto is the first master of naturalism in Italy. The old writers, Villani, Boccaccio and even Vasari, emphasize, and not without good reason, the irresistible impression made on his

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contemporaries by his fidelity to nature, and it is not for nothing that they contrast his style with the stiffness and artificiality of the Byzantine art, which was still widespread when he appeared on the scene. We have become accustomed to compare the clarity and simplicity, the logic and precision of his style with the later, more trifling kind of naturalism, and we, thereby, overlook what tremendous progress his art had meant in the direct representation of things, how much he was able to make clear and to relate pictorially that up till then it had been impossible in painting. Thus, for us, he has come to stand for the great principles of classical form, based on severe and lofty rules, whereas he was really the master of a simple, sober, straightforward middle-class art, the classical quality of which sprang from the ordering and synthesizing of experience, from the rationalization and simplification of reality, not from an idealism abstracted from reality. He was made out to be inspired by classical formalism, whereas he himself wanted to be nothing but a good story-teller, expressing himself concisely and precisely, whose rigorous formalism is to be taken as striving for dramatic effect, not as anti-naturalistic aloofness. His conception of art is rooted in a still comparatively unpretentious middle-class world, although it is a world already firmly grounded on capitalistic foundations. His activity falls into the period of economic prosperity between the formation of the political guilds and the bankruptcy of the Bardi and Peruzzi, into that first great period of middle-class culture, in which the finest buildings of medieval Florence, the churches of S. Maria Novella and S. Croce, the Palazzo Vecchio and the Cathedral with the Campanile, were created. Giotto's art is austere and objective, like the character of those who commissioned his works, men who wished to be prosperous and to exercise authority, but who attached not too much importance to outward show and lavish expenditure. After him, the style of Florentine art became more and more natural, in our modern sense of the word, that is to say, more and more scientific, but no artist of the Renaissance ever made a more honest effort than he to be as simple, direct and true as possible in the description of reality.

The whole Trecento is dominated by this naturalistic style of Giotto's. It is true that here and there there are still traces of earlier

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styles, of failures to escape from the stereotyped forms of the pre-Giotto tradition; there are retarding, even reactionary tendencies, which hold fast to the hieratic style of the early Middle Ages, but naturalism is now predominant. The progressive style of Giotto undergoes its first significant transformation in Siena, and from here it penetrates to the North and the West chiefly through the mediation of Simone Martini and his frescoes in the papal palace in Avignon.⁴⁴ For a time, Siena takes the lead in the development, whilst Florence has to take a back seat. Giotto dies in the year 1337; the financial crisis which results from the great insolvencies begins in 1339; the barren period of the despotic rule of the Duke of Athens covers the years 1342-3; in 1346 a serious insurrection takes place; 1348 is the year of the great plague, which rages more terribly in Florence than elsewhere; the years between the plague and the *ciompi* revolt are full of unrest, tumults and insurrections: it is a sterile period for the plastic arts. In Siena, where the influence of the lower middle class is stronger and both social and religious traditions are more deeply rooted, intellectual development proceeds less disturbed by crises and catastrophes, and religious feeling is able to clothe itself in more up-to-date and more developable forms, precisely because it is still a thoroughly live feeling. The most important progress in advance of Giotto is made by the Sienese artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the creator of the naturalistic landscape and the illusionistic town-panorama. In contrast to Giotto's treatment of space, which is unified and continuous, but in which the depth never extends beyond that of stage scenery, he creates in his picture of Siena a view which, not only for its breadth of space but also for the natural connection of the parts into a spatial whole, surpasses all previous efforts of this kind. The picture of Siena is so life-like that one can still recognize which part of the city the painter used as his main theme, and imagine oneself moving about in the alleys which wind in and out alongside the palaces of the *nobili* and the houses of the middle class, the workshops and business houses, and up the hills.

In Florence the situation first develops not only more slowly but also less uniformly than in Siena.⁴⁵ It is true that it keeps mainly to naturalistic paths but by no means always in the direc-

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tion of the Lorenzetti type of milieu painting. Taddeo Gaddi, Bernardo Daddi, Spinello Aretino, are simple story-tellers like Lorenzetti himself; with the empirical tendency of their art, they are in line with the tradition of Giotto and strive, above all, to achieve the illusion of spatial depth. But there is another important trend in Florence alongside of this direction, namely that of Andrea Orcagna, Nardo di Cione and their pupils, which follows not the intimacy and spontaneity of the art of Lorenzetti, but the solemn hieratic style of the Middle Ages, its rigid symmetry, its principles of sequence and accumulation. The thesis that all this is merely evidence of an anti-naturalistic reaction⁴⁶ has, however, rightly been disputed, and attention has been drawn to the fact that naturalism in painting is by no means limited to the illusion of spatial depth and the dissolution of geometrically bound forms, but that those 'tactile values' which Berenson praises precisely in connection with Orcagna are just as much the achievement of naturalism.⁴⁷ With the plastic volume and statuesque weight which he gives to his figures, Orcagna represents, historically, just as progressive a direction as Lorenzetti or Taddeo Gaddi with their deepening and extension of the space occupied by the representation. How unfounded the hypothesis is that what we are dealing with here is a deliberately archaistic tendency, based on the influence of the Dominicans, is best shown by the frescoes in the Spanish chapel of the monastery of S. Maria Novella, which, although they are dedicated to the glorification of the Dominican order, are among the most progressive artistic creations of the age.

In the fifteenth century Siena forfeits its leading place in the history of art. Florence, now at the height of its economic power, comes back into the foreground again. The position which it holds does not perhaps directly explain the existence and the character of its great masters, but it does explain the uninterrupted flow of commissions and the competitive atmosphere from which the Florentine masters emerged. Florence is now, in addition to Venice, which, however, has its own by no means typical development, the only place in Italy where any important progressive activity is taking place in the world of art, more or less independent of the Western European, late medieval court style.

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In middle-class Florence there is, to start with, only a limited understanding for the chivalric art imported from France and adopted by the courts in North Italy. This region stands closer to the West geographically and has, to some extent, direct contact with French-speaking territory. As early as the second half of the thirteenth century, the French novels of chivalry circulate here and are not merely translated and imitated in the native tongue, as in the other countries of Europe, but are also further developed in the original language. Epic poems are composed in French, just as lyrical poems are written in the language of the troubadours.⁴⁸ It is true that the great trading cities of Central Italy are by no means cut off from the North and West, and their merchants, who maintain commercial relations with France and Flanders, transmit the elements of chivalric culture to Tuscany, but no one here is interested in an indigenous epic of chivalry or in painting in the grand, romantic, courtly-chivalric style. At the princely courts in the Po valley, in Milan, Verona, Padua, Ravenna and in many other smaller towns, where the dynasties and despots conduct their courts in strict accordance with the French model, the French novels of chivalry are not only read with undiminished enthusiasm, not only copied and imitated, but also illustrated in the style of the originals.⁴⁹ And the painting activity of these courts is by no means restricted to the production of illuminated manuscripts, but extends to mural decoration consisting of representations of ideas derived from the novels of chivalry and themes from court life, of battles and tournaments, hunting-scenes and cavalcades, scenes of play and dancing, tales from mythology, the Bible and history, portraits of heroes of antiquity and the present, allegories of the cardinal virtues, of the free arts and, above all, of love in all its possible forms and variations. Usually, these paintings keep to the style of tapestry, the genre to which they probably owe their whole origin. They try, like their models, to arouse a dazzling, festive impression chiefly through the splendour of the costumes and the ceremonial behaviour of the society portrayed. The figures are represented in conventional poses, but are comparatively well observed and drawn with a certain facility, which is the more understandable as this painting is in fact rooted in the same Gothic naturalism

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from which the middle-class art of the late Middle Ages is also derived. One need only think of Pisanello to appreciate what the naturalism of the Renaissance owes to these mural paintings with their verdure-like backgrounds, their freshly observed and well-painted plants and animals. The earliest surviving remains of this decorative painting in Italy probably date from no further back than the beginning of the fifteenth century, but the older examples from the fourteenth century will hardly have been essentially different. What is extant is in Piedmont and in Lombardy, and the most important examples are in the castle La Manta in Saluzzo and in the Palazzo Borromeo in Milan. But we know from contemporary accounts, that many other princely seats in North Italy also possessed rich and fastidious mural decorations, especially the castle of Cangrande in Verona and the castle of the Carrara in Padua.⁵⁰

In contrast to the art of the courts, that of the city republics had an essentially ecclesiastical character in the Trecento. Not until the fifteenth century does its spirit and its style change; only then does it assume a secular character in accordance with the new private demands for art and the universal rationalization of the age. Not only new secular genres appear, however, such as narrative painting and the portrait, but specifically religious pictures also become full of secular motifs. Even so middle-class art still preserves more points of contact with the Church and religion than the art of the courts, and the middle class remains, at least in this respect, more conservative than the court society of the princely residences. But from the middle of the century courtly-chivalric characteristics also become apparent in urban middle-class, particularly Florentine, art. Spread abroad by the minstrels, the novels of chivalry penetrate to the lower levels of society, and in their popular form even reach the Tuscan cities; in so doing, however, they lose their original idealistic character and become mere light reading.⁵¹ It is above all this literature which arouses the interest of the indigenous painters in romantic subjects, but the direct influence of artists like Gentile da Fabriano and Domenico Veneziano, who diffuse the courtly artistic tastes of their northern Italian homeland in Florence, must also be taken into account. Finally, the middle-class élite which has

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become rich and powerful begins to adopt the manners of court society and to see in the themes of romantic chivalry not merely something exotic but also something worth emulating.

At the beginning of the Quattrocento, however, there is relatively little evidence of this new turning towards the courtly style in art. The masters of the first generation of the century, especially Masaccio and Donatello, stand nearer to the austere art of Giotto, with its concentrated spatial form and statuesque figure drawing, than to the precious style of the courts and to the dainty and often playful forms of Trecento painting. After the shocks of the great financial crisis, the plague and the *ciompi* revolt, this generation has to start almost from the beginning again. In its manners as well as in its taste, the middle class now shows itself more simple, more sober, more puritanical than before. An objective, realistic, unromantic attitude to life now predominates again in Florence, with a new, fresh, robust naturalism, against which the courtly-aristocratic conception of art can only make its way gradually, in the measure that the middle class becomes consolidated again. The art of Masaccio and of the young Donatello is the art of a society still fighting for its life, albeit thoroughly optimistic and confident of victory, the art of a new heroic period in the development of capitalism, of a new epoch of conquest. The confident, although not always absolutely secure, feeling of power that is expressed in the political decisions of these years is also expressed in the imposing realism of the art. The complacent sentimentality, the playful exuberance of the forms, the calligraphic lineal style of Trecento painting disappears. The figures again become more physical, more massive, more in repose; they stand more firmly on their legs, move about in space more freely and more naturally. They express power, energy, dignity and gravity, are more compact than over-delicate, more coarse than elegant. The feeling of this art is fundamentally un-Gothic, that is to say, unmetaphysical and unsymbolical, unromantic and unceremonial. That is, at any rate, the predominant, if not also the exclusive tendency of the new art. The artistic culture of the Quattrocento is already so complicated, and so many different hereditary and educational levels of society participate in it, that it is impossible to form any completely uniform and

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universally valid conception of its nature. Beside the 'Renaissance-like', classically statuesque style of Masaccio and Donatello, the Gothically spiritualistic and ornamental tradition is still thoroughly alive, not only in the art of Fra Angelico and Lorenzo Monaco, but also in the works of such progressive artists as Andrea del Castagno and Paolo Uccello. In an economically so differentiated and culturally complex society as that of the Renaissance, a stylistic tendency does not disappear from one day to the next, even if the class for which its products were originally intended loses its political and economic power and is replaced as an upholder of culture by another class or changes its own intellectual outlook. The medieval-spiritualistic style may already have seemed out of date and unattractive to the majority of the middle class, but it was still most in accord with the religious feelings of a very considerable minority. Different classes of society and different artists dependent on these classes, different generations of art-consumers and art-producers, young and old, harbingers and stragglers, live side by side in every more highly developed culture; but in such a comparatively old culture as the Renaissance the separate tendencies hardly any longer find absolutely clear expression in any one cultural group, unaffected by the others. The antagonism between the various aims cannot be explained merely by the contiguity of the different generations, the 'simultaneity of different ages';⁵² conflicts often exist within one and the same generation: Donatello and Fra Angelico, Masaccio and Domenico Veneziano were born within a few years of each other, yet Piero della Francesca is separated by half a generation from Masaccio, with whom he has the greatest affinity. The antagonisms are even present within the mind of the individual artists. In an artist like Fra Angelico ecclesiastical and secular, Gothic and Renaissance elements are fused as indissolubly as rationalism and romanticism, the middle-class and the court element are in Castagno, Uccello, Pesellino and Gozzoli. The frontier dividing the stragglers of the Gothic period from the precursors of the middle-class romanticism, that is in many respects related to the Gothic, is absolutely fluid.

Naturalism, which constituted the basic artistic tendency of the whole century, repeatedly changes its direction according to

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social developments. The monumental naturalism of Masaccio, with its anti-Gothic simplicity and its emphasis on the clarification of spatial relationships and proportions, the richness of genre traits in the art of Gozzoli and the psychological sensibility of Botticelli represent three different stages in the historical development of the middle class as it rises from frugal circumstances to the level of a real money aristocracy. A motif taken from the direct observation of life, like the 'freezing man' in Masaccio's 'Baptism of St. Peter' in the Brancacci chapel, is still a rarity at the beginning of the Quattrocento, but quite normal towards the middle of the century. The delight in the individual instance, in the characteristic and trivial, now comes into the foreground for the first time. The idea now arises of a world-picture made up of the 'petits faits vrais', such as was previously unknown in the history of art. The subjects of the new naturalistic art are episodes from everyday middle-class life, street scenes and interiors, lying-in rooms and betrothals, the Birth of Mary and the Visitation as social scenes, Hieronymus in the milieu of a middle-class home and the life of the saints in the bustle of busy towns. It would be wrong to assume, however, that the artists were trying to say: 'the saints are also only human beings', and that the fondness for themes of middle-class life was a token of class-conscious modesty; on the contrary, they took a self-satisfied pride in revealing all the details of this everyday life. But the members of the rich middle class, who now come forward as persons interested in art, do not desire to seem more than they are, thoroughly aware though they are of their own importance. Not until the second half of the century do the first signs of a change appear. Piero della Francesca already betrays a certain taste for solemn attitudes and a fondness for ceremonial form. It must be remembered, of course, that he worked a good deal for princely patrons and stood under the direct influence of court conventions. But in Florence art remains on the whole unconventional and informal until the end of the century, although here, too, it becomes more and more ornamented and precious, striving increasingly after elegance and delicacy. At any rate, the public of Antonio del Pollajuolo and Andrea del Verrocchio, Botticelli and Ghirlandajo has no longer anything in common with that puritanically-

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minded middle class for which Masaccio and the young Donatello worked.

The antagonism between Cosimo and Lorenzo Medici, the difference in the principles according to which they exercise their power and organize their private life, is typical of the whole distance which separates their generations from one another. Just as after the reign of Cosimo the form of government was transformed from that of an apparently democratic republic into that of an absolute principality, and just as the 'first citizen' with his followers had become a prince with his household, so also there developed out of the once so plain and industrious middle class a class of *rentiers*, who despise work and money-earning, who only want to enjoy the wealth inherited from their fathers and devote their lives to leisure. Cosimo was still entirely a business man; it is true that he loved art and philosophy, had beautiful houses and villas built for himself, surrounded himself with artists and scholars and could make a lavish show in public when the occasion demanded, but the bank and the office were the real centre of his life. Lorenzo no longer takes any interest in the business of his grandfather and great-grandfathers, he neglects it and allows it to decline; he is only interested in state business, in his connections with the European dynasties, his court household, his rôle as intellectual leader, his Neoplatonic philosophers and his art academy, his experiments in poetry and his patronage of the arts. Externally everything continues to take place in middle-class patriarchal forms. Lorenzo does not allow his person and his house to form the object of a cult; the portraits of members of the family still serve, as do those of other distinguished citizens of the city, purely private purposes, and are not intended for the public, as are the statues of the Grand Dukes a hundred years later.⁵³

The late Quattrocento has been described as the culture of a 'second generation', a generation of spoilt sons and rich heirs, and the contrast to the first half of the century considered so outstanding that one could speak of a deliberately reactionary movement, of an intentional 'restoration of the Gothic' and of a 'counter-Renaissance'.⁵⁴ As opposed to this conception, it has rightly been pointed out that the tendency which is here described as a return to the Gothic forms a permanent undercurrent of

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the early Renaissance, and does not begin to appear only in the second half of this period.⁵⁵ But evident as is the continuance of medieval traditions and the grappling of the middle-class mind with the ideas of the Gothic, it is no less obvious that an anti-Gothic, unromantic and uncourtly outlook is predominant in the bourgeoisie until the middle of the century, and that spiritualism, conventionalism and conservatism do not gain the upper hand till the age of Lorenzo. One must not, however, imagine the development to have been such that the dynamic and dialectical structure of the middle-class mind was changed suddenly and absolutely into a state of immobility. The predominance of conservative, spiritualistic, courtly and chivalric tendencies in the second half of the Quattrocento is no less contested than that of progressive, liberal and realistic tendencies in the first half of the century. Just as there had been, in early times, alongside the progressive circles of society also such as had a retarding influence on new developments, so now alongside the conservative groups progressive elements make their mark everywhere.

The withdrawal of the sated strata of society from active economic life and the advance into the vacant positions of new elements, who had hitherto had no part in the risks and chances of a profit economy, or, in other words, the advancement of the destitute strata of society into well-to-do and of the well-to-do into aristocratic positions, is typical of the constant rhythm of capitalistic development.⁵⁶ The upholders of culture, who were still progressively-minded yesterday, feel and think conservatively today, but before they can completely transform cultural life to suit their new outlook, a new dynamically-minded stratum comes into possession of the instruments of culture—a group which a generation ago still stood outside the sphere of culture, and which a generation later will itself have a retarding influence on the development, in order to make room in its turn for a new progressive group. In the second half of the Quattrocento the conservative elements set the fashion in Florence, but the shifting of social influence from one class to another by no means comes to a standstill; there are still considerable dynamic forces at work, which prevent the stagnation of art into a condition of courtly preciosity, conventionalism and ‘artiness’. Despite the tendency

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to mannered subtleties and an often empty elegance, new naturalistic efforts make themselves felt. However many courtly characteristics the art of the period takes on, and however formalistic and affectedly artistic it becomes, it never cuts itself off completely from the possibility of revising and expanding its outlook. It remains an art delighting in reality and open to new experience—the medium of expression of a somewhat finicky and fastidious society, but one by no means averse to the reception of new impulses. This mixture of naturalism and convention, rationalism and romanticism produces at the same time both the middle-class respectability of Ghirlandajo and the aristocratic delicacy of Desiderio, the robust realism of Verrocchio and the poetic dreaminess of Piero di Cosimo, the gay charm of Pesellino and the effeminate melancholy of Botticelli. The sociological presuppositions of the change of style which occurs about the middle of the century are to be sought partly in the shrinking of the public interested in art. The rule of the Medici inflicted considerable injury on economic life by the pressure of taxation and forced many business men to leave Florence and transfer their businesses to other cities.⁵⁷ Symptoms of industrial decline, the emigration of workers and the falling-off in production are noticeable even in Cosimo's lifetime.⁵⁸ Wealth is concentrated in fewer hands. The private interest in art, which spreads to ever widening circles in the first half of the century, shows a tendency to become confined to narrower circles. Commissions are given mainly by the Medici and a few other families; as a consequence, artistic production takes on a more exclusive, more fastidious character.

In the course of the last two centuries the commissions for the building of churches and for ecclesiastical works of art in the free Italian cities had been given mostly not by the ecclesiastical authorities themselves but by their secular agents and attorneys, that is to say, on the one hand, the communes, the great guilds and spiritual fraternities, and, on the other, the private patrons, the rich and distinguished families.⁵⁹ Communal building and artistic activity reached its zenith in the fourteenth century, in the first flowering of urban economy; middle-class ambition was still expressing itself in collective forms—it was only later that it

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assumed more personal characteristics. The Italian communes spent their money on this artistic activity just as the Greek city states had done before them. And not only Florence and Siena, also the small communes, such as Pisa and Lucca, were anxious to play their part and exhausted themselves by an excess of patronage. In most cases the individual rulers who came to power continued the artistic activities of the communes and outdid them in the expenditure of their resources. By flattering the vanity of the townspeople and presenting them with works of art for which the recipients themselves usually had to pay in the end, they provided the best advertisement for themselves and their government. This was the case, for example, in the erecting of Milan Cathedral, whilst the costs of the building of the Certosa of Pavia were met from the privy purse of the Visconti and the Sforza.⁶⁰

The artistic activities of the guilds were not limited in Italy, as in other lands, to the building and decoration of their own oratories and guildhalls, but extended to direct participation in artistic undertakings, especially the great church buildings of the city communes. Such tasks were the concern of the guilds from the very beginning in Italy and they grew in extent as the political and economic influence of the corporations declined. But the guilds were in most cases merely the experts and supervisory organs of the communes, just as these, too, were often merely the stewards of private foundations. The corporations must on no account be regarded as the patrons nor even as the spiritual originators of all the artistic enterprises directed by them; often they merely took care of the money made available for the buildings, and supplemented it at best with loans or freewill contributions from members of the guilds.⁶¹ To supervise the undertakings with which they were entrusted, they formed building commissions from their own ranks, consisting of four to twelve members (*operai*) according to the size of the undertaking. These commissions organized competitions, commissioned the individual artists, gave an opinion on their plans, supervised the execution of the work, supplied the materials and liquidated the wages. If the criticism of the artistic and technical work required special knowledge, they called in specialists to advise them.⁶² With such

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resources, the Arte della Lana directed the building of the Cathedral and the Campanile in Florence, the Calimala directed the work on the Baptistry and the church of S. Miniato and the Arte della Seta the building of the Foundling-hospital. What usually happened in the competitions is best shown by the history of the bronze doors of the Baptistry. In 1401 the Calimala organized an open competition for the making of the doors. Of those who competed for the commission, six artists were chosen for the short list, amongst others Brunelleschi, Ghiberti and Jacopo della Quercia. They were given a year to produce a bronze relief, the subject of which must have been exactly described, to judge from the thematic similarity of the works which have been preserved. The production costs and the livelihood of the artists during the test were covered by the Calimala. A tribunal appointed by the guild and consisting of thirty-four well-known artists passed the final verdict on the specimens submitted.

The artistic commissions given by the middle class consisted, to begin with, mainly in gifts for churches and monasteries; not until towards the middle of the century were orders placed in greater numbers for secular works and works intended for private purposes. From then on, the homes of rich middle-class citizens as well as the castles and palaces of the princes and the *nobili* are adorned with pictures and sculptures. Naturally, considerations of prestige, the desire to shine and to set up a memorial to oneself, play just as great, if not an even greater part in all this artistic activity than the satisfaction of purely aesthetic needs. It is a well-known fact that these interests were indeed by no means absent in the endowments of ecclesiastical art. But conditions had changed to the extent that the most distinguished families, the Strozzi, the Quaratesi, the Rucellai, are much more keenly occupied with their palaces than with their family chapels. Giovanni Rucellai is perhaps the best representative of the new type of secularly-minded patron.⁶³ He comes from a patrician family which had made its money in the wool industry and he belongs to the generation devoted to the enjoyment of life which begins to withdraw from business during the regime of Lorenzo Medici. 'I have now', he writes in his autobiographical notes, one of the famous 'Zibaldoni' of the time, 'done nothing for fifty years but

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earn and spend money, and it has become clear to me that spending money gives more pleasure than earning it.' Of his ecclesiastical foundations he says that they have given and still give him the greatest satisfaction, for they redound to the glory of God as well as to the glory of the city and his own memory. But Giovanni Rucellai is no longer merely a founder and builder, but also a collector; he owns works by Castagno, Uccello, Domenico Veneziano, Antonio Pollajuolo, Verrocchio, Desiderio da Settignano and others. The development of the art connoisseur from founder to collector can best be followed, incidentally, by considering the Medici. Cosimo is still above all the builder of the churches of S. Marco, S. Croce, S. Lorenzo and of the Badia of Fiesole; his son Piero is already a systematic collector; and Lorenzo is exclusively a collector.

The collector and the artist working independently of the customer are historically correlative; in the course of the Renaissance they appear simultaneously and side by side. The change does not, however, occur all at once, it represents a long process. The art of the early Renaissance still bears an on the whole workmanlike character, varying according to the nature of the commission, so that the starting point of production is to be found mostly not in the creative urge, the subjective self-expression and spontaneous inspiration of the artist, but in the task set by the customer. The market is, therefore, not yet determined by the supply but by the demand.⁶⁴ Every product still has its exactly definable utilitarian purpose and concrete connection with practical life. An order is placed for an altar-piece in a chapel well known to the artist, for a devotional picture in a definite room, for the portrait of a member of the family on a certain wall; every piece of sculpture is planned from the outset for one special place, and every piece of furniture of any importance designed for a definite interior. In our days of artistic freedom it has become an unproven dogma that there was inevitably something beneficial and helpful in the outward constraint to which the artist had to submit in earlier ages, but to which he was also in a position to submit. The results seem to justify this belief, but the artists affected thought differently on the matter; they tried to emancipate themselves from these restraints upon their freedom

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as soon as conditions in the art market allowed. This occurred when the place of the mere consumer of art was taken by the amateur, the connoisseur and the collector, and is, by that modern type of consumer who no longer orders what he needs but buys what is offered. His appearance on the market meant the end of the period in which art was conditioned exclusively by the consumer and the buyer, and it created new and previously unheard-of opportunities for the free and independent artist.

The Quattrocento is the first epoch since the classical age from which a considerable selection of secular works of art has come down to us, including not merely numerous examples of the already well-known genres, such as mural paintings and easel pictures of a secular content, tapestries, embroideries, goldsmiths' work and armour, but also many works of a quite new kind, above all creations of the new upper middle-class domiciliary culture which, in contrast to the old imposing court style, are based on comfort and intimacy: richly decorated wainscoting, painted and carved chests (*cassoni*), elaborately worked bedsteads, devotional pictures for the home in dainty round frames (*tondi*), figurally decorated plates given as presents to ladies in confinement (*dischi di parto*), besides other kinds of majolica and many other products of applied art. All this output is characterized by an almost complete homogeneity of art and craft, of fine art and mere decoration; a change takes place only after the autonomy of purposeless and useless art has been recognized and confronted with the mechanical nature of mere craftwork. Not until then does the personal union of the artist and the craftsman cease, and the painter begin to create his pictures from a viewpoint different from that which inspired the painting of chests and wall panelling, flags and saddle-cloths, plates and jugs. But then he also begins to break away from the patron's wishes and to concentrate more on the production of art as a saleable commodity. From the artist's angle, that is the presupposition behind the emergence of the amateur, the connoisseur and the collector. From the consumer's angle, the presupposition is the formalistic, non-utilitarian conception of art—a form, however primitive, of 'l'art pour l'art'. An immediate concomitant of the arrival of the collector, and a phenomenon which results from the impersonal

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relationship between the buyer and the artist and his work, is the fine art trade. In the Quattrocento, in which there are only isolated cases of systematic collecting, the trading with works of art, independent of their producers, is almost unknown; it does not arise until the following century with the beginnings of a regular demand for monuments of the past and the buying up of works by famous masters of the present.⁶⁵ The first fine art dealer whom we know by name is the Florentine Giov. Batt. della Palla, who comes on the scene at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In his native city he orders and acquires *objets d'art* for the French king and already buys from private owners, not merely from artists. Soon cases also occur in which a merchant orders pictures with a view to speculation, hoping to sell them again at a profit.⁶⁶

The wealthy and distinguished citizens of the city republics wanted to make sure of their posthumous fame, although they had to exercise a certain degree of restraint in their way of life, out of consideration for their fellow-citizens. Ecclesiastical endowments were the most suitable method by which to secure eternal fame without challenging public criticism. This is a partial explanation of the incogruity between ecclesiastical and secular art even in the first half of the Quattrocento. Piety was by no means any longer the most important motive behind the endowments of Church art. Castello Quaratesi wanted to provide the church of S. Croce with a façade, but as he was refused permission to put his coat of arms on it, he gave up the whole project.⁶⁷ Even the Medici considered it advisable to give an ecclesiastical tinge to their patronage of the arts. At any rate, Cosimo tried rather to hide than display his private expenditure on art. The Pazzi, Brancacci, Bardi, Sassetti, Tornabuoni, Strozzi, Rucellai immortalized their names by the building and decorating of chapels. They used the best artists of the time for this purpose. The Cappella dei Pazzi was built by Brunelleschi, the chapels of the Brancacci, Sassetti, Tornabuoni, Strozzi decorated by painters like Masaccio, Baldovinetti, Ghirlandajo and Filippino Lippi. It is very doubtful whether the Medici were the most unselfish and intelligent of these friends of art. Of the two great Medici, Cosimo seems to have the more solid and balanced taste. Or was it merely

his age that was more balanced? He employed Donatello, Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Michelozzo, Fra Angelico, Luca della Robbia, Benozzo Gozzoli, Fra Filippo Lippi. Donatello, the greatest of them all, certainly had a more enthusiastic friend and patron in Roberto Martelli. Otherwise why would he have repeatedly left Florence if Cosimo had appreciated his true worth? 'Cosimo was a great friend of Donatello and of all painters and sculptors'—we read in the memoirs of Vespasiano Bisticci, it is true. But, he goes on, 'as it seemed to him, that there was little work available for the latter and as he was sorry that Donatello should remain inactive, he entrusted him with the pulpits and doors of the sacristy in San Lorenzo'.⁶⁸ But why, in this golden age of the arts, should an artist like Donatello be in danger of unemployment? Why should Donatello be given a commission only as a special favour?

It is just as difficult or even more difficult properly to assess Lorenzo's understanding of art. The high standard and the variety of the talents in his entourage has always been placed to his personal credit, and the intense feeling for life which the poets, philosophers and artists promoted by him express has been characterized as radiating from his personality. Since Voltaire, his age has been reckoned with the age of Pericles, the principate of Augustus and the Grand Siècle as one of the happy periods in human history. He himself was a poet and philosopher, an art collector and the founder of the first academy of art in the world. The part played in his life by Neoplatonism and the debt owed to him personally by this movement is well known. The details of his friendly relationships with the artists of his time are familiar. It is well known that Verrocchio restored antiques for him, that Giuliano da Sangallo built the Villa da Cajano and the sacristy of S. Lorenzo for him, that Antonio Pollajuolo was much employed by him and that Botticelli and Filippino Lippi were close friends of his. But think of all the names that are missing from this list! Lorenzo not only did without the services of Benedetto da Majano, the creator of the Palazzo Strozzi, and of Perugino, who spent many years in Florence during his rule, but also those of Leonardo, the greatest artist since Donatello, who apparently left Florence owing to lack of recognition and had to move to Milan.

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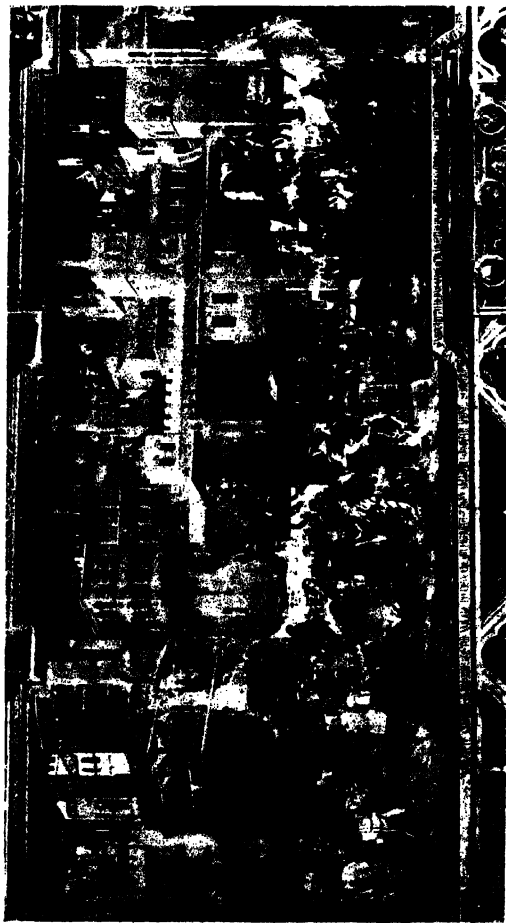
Perhaps the fact that he had absolutely nothing to do with the Neoplatonic movement⁶⁹ explains why Lorenzo took no interest in him. Neoplatonism, like Platonic idealism itself, was the expression of a purely contemplative attitude to the world and, like every philosophy that falls back on pure ideas as the only authoritative principles, it implied a renunciation of the things of 'common reality'. It left the fate of this reality to the actual holders of power; for the true philosopher strives, as Ficino thought, only to die to temporal reality and to live in the timeless world of ideas.⁷⁰ It is obvious that this philosophy appealed inevitably to a man like Lorenzo, who had destroyed the last vestiges of democracy and disapproved of every kind of political activism.⁷¹ In any case, the Platonic doctrine, which it is so easy to dilute and to translate into purely poetical terms, will have been in accordance with his taste.

Nothing is more typical of Lorenzo's patronage than his relation to Bertoldo. This elegant but relatively unimportant sculptor was the most closely associated with him of all the artists of the time. Bertoldo lived with him, sat daily at his table, accompanied him on his travels, was his confidant, his artistic adviser and the director of his academy. He had humour and a sense of tact and always maintained a respectful distance from his master despite the intimacy of the relationship; he was a man of fine culture and possessed the gift of entering intelligently into the artistic ideas and desires of his patron; he was a man of high personal worth and was, nevertheless, prepared to subordinate himself absolutely; he was, in a word, the ideal court artist.⁷² It must have been a source of great pleasure to Lorenzo to be able to help Bertoldo at his work as he 'devised complicated and strange, occasionally also quite banal allegories and classical myths',⁷³ and to see the realization of his humanistic scholarship, his mythological dreams and poetic phantasies. Bertoldo's style, his restriction to the material of noble, supple yet enduring bronze and the form of dainty and elegant compositions with small figures, was most in accordance with Lorenzo's conception of art in any case. His fondness for the minor arts is unmistakable. Very few of the great creations of Florentine sculpture were in his possession;⁷⁴ gems and cameos, of which he possessed some

1. ROBERT CAMPIN: VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH A FIRESCREEN, London, National Gallery. First half of the 15th century. —The use of the firescreen, which forms the head of the Virgin, is characteristic of the rationalization of artistic symbolism which takes place at the end of the Middle Ages.

2. GIOTTO: MEETING OF ST. JOACHIM AND ST. ANNE AT JERUSALEM. Fresco in the Cappella dell' Arena in Padua. About 1305. —Giotto is the first and greatest master of the bourgeois classicism that brings into perfect balance the naturalistic and formalistic elements of the representation. With him the clarity and precision of the form are, above all, the means of a story-teller who strives to express himself as concisely as possible and with the greatest dramatic intensity.





1. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI: THE GOOD GOVERNMENT. Fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, 1335-40.— Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the creator of the illusionistic town-panorama, takes, with the greater freedom of his spatial arrangement, the first important step in the artistic development leading beyond Giotto's style.

2. NARDO DI CIONE: Detail from the 'Paradise'. Fresco in S. Maria Novella in Florence. The 'fifths of the Trecento. The art of Nardo di Cione and Andrea Orcagna signifies, with the rigid planimetric organization of their compositions, the continuation of the solemn, hieratic style of the Middle Ages, but, at the same time, with the greater certainty in the reproduction of plastic forms, it marks an important stage in the progress of naturalism.



1. MASACCIO: THE TRIBUTE MONEY. *Fresco in the Brancacci Chapel of the Chiesa del Carmine in Florence, 1425-27.* The works of Masaccio are amongst the most representative artistic creations of the first generation of the Quattrocento in Florence. With their robust realism and healthy rationalism, they express the outlook of the bourgeoisie in its hard but confident struggle for power.

2. MASACCIO: ST. PETER BAPTIZING. *Florence, Chiesa del Carmine, 1425-27.* The 'freezing man' at the right-hand edge of the picture is a classical example of the naturalism of the early Quattrocento.

5. DONATELLO: JUDITH AND HOLOFERNES. *Bronze group in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, 1455-57.*—Characteristic of the relation between art and craft in the early Renaissance is the fact that Donatello plans this important work as a decoration for a fountain in a courtyard.



1. GENTILE DA FABRIANO: THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. *Florence, Uffizi. 1423.* *The influence of the chivalrous romantic spirit of the North Italian courts makes itself felt in Florence as early as the beginning of the 15th century. No work is more characteristic of this trend than Gentile's 'Adoration' which stands, with its sumptuous and festive character, in the sharpest possible contrast to the bourgeois art of the period.*

2. FRA ANGELICO: ANNUNCIATION. *Florence, Museo di S. Marco. About 1440.* *The combination of the ecclesiastical and the secular, the medieval and the modern elements in the painting of Fra Angelico is typical of the mixture of styles in the first half of the Quattrocento.*



1. PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA: THE QUEEN OF SHEBA BEFORE SOLOMON. *From the fresco cycle 'The Legend of the Holy Cross' in the Choir of S. Francesco in Arezzo. About 1460.* Piero's art is guided fundamentally by naturalistic and rationalistic principles, but the courtly touch in the solemn and monumental style of the master, who was for long in the service of a court, is unmistakable.

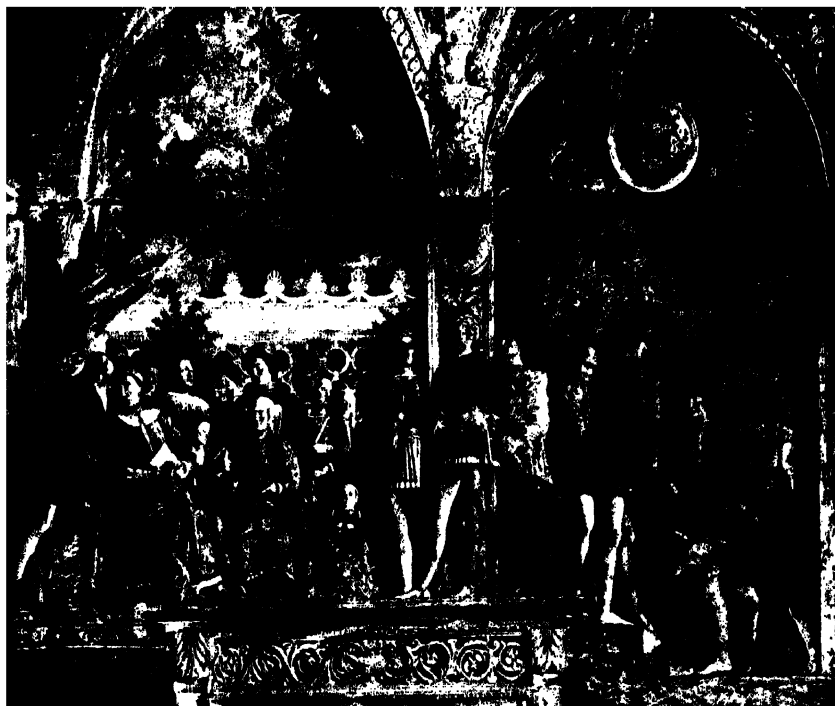
2. DOMENICO GHIRLANDAIO: THE BIRTH OF JOHN. *Fresco in the Choir of S. Maria Novella in Florence. Completed in 1490.* Towards the end of the century, art in Florence takes on an upper middle class, patrician character. On the whole it remains unconventional and preserves its earlier liberalism, but the generation to which its public belongs, the third of the century, represents an age group of wealthy heirs which attaches more importance to elegance and genteel appearance than to solidity and intellectual independence.



1. BOTTICELLI: ANNUNCIATION.
 Florence, Uffizi. About 1490.
 Botticelli is the main representative
 of the aristocratizing tendency in
 Florentine painting. He is the chief
 master of that neo-romantic trend
 which deflects the solid realism of
 bourgeois art into the precious and
 the mannered.



2. DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO:
 FEMALE BUST. Paris, Louvre.
 After the middle of the century.
 The type of the elegant upper
 middle-class portrait with strong
 emphasis on the delicate and sen-
 sitive features of the model.



1. MANTEGNA: MARCHESI LUDOVICO II WITH FAMILY. *Fresco in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, 1474.* Mantegna is one of the most important mediators between the bourgeois and the courtly art of the Quattrocento. He describes life at the court of Ludovico Gonzaga with the same directness as, for example, Ghirlandajo the life of the Florentine patricians.

2. FRANCESCO COSSA: THE TRIUMPH OF VENUS (Detail). *Fresco in the Palazzo Schifanoja in Ferrara, 1470.* The classical example of the knightly-romantic art cultivated at the North Italian courts of the Quattrocento.





1. BERTOLDO: BELLEPHON AND PEGASUS. *Vienna, Kunst-historisches Museum. Towards the end of the century.* - *An important example of the artistic trend promoted by Lorenzo.*

2. NERI DI BICCI: ANNUNCIATION. *Florence, Uffizi, 1458.* - *A typical product of the busy workshop working for the broader strata of the middle class.*

five to six thousand, formed the nucleus of his collection.⁷⁵ This genre was part of the classical inheritance, and was favoured by him as such. The fact that it cultivated a classical technique and classical subject-matter was indeed not the least recommendation of Bertoldo's art. The whole of Lorenzo's activity as patron and collector was nothing but the hobby of a grand seigneur; and just as his collection bore in many respects the marks of a prince's cabinet of curios, so his taste in general, his fondness for the dainty and the expensive, the trifling and the artistic, had many points of contact with the petty regent's penchant for the rococo.

In the Quattrocento, besides Florence, which remains the most important artistic centre in Italy until the end of the century, other important centres for the cultivation of the arts develop, above all at the courts of Ferrara, Mantua and Urbino. They follow the pattern of the northern Italian courts of the fourteenth century; to them they owe their chivalric-romantic ideals and the tradition of their strictly formal, non-middle-class mode of life. But the new middle-class spirit, with its rationalism aiming at efficient production and emancipating itself from tradition, does not leave the life of the courts unaffected. It is true that the old novels of chivalry are still read, but a new, more aloof, half-ironical attitude to them has been found. Not only Luigi Pulci in middle-class Florence, but also Bojardo in courtly Ferrara, treats the chivalric themes in a new semi-serious tone of detachment. The mural paintings in the castles and palaces still preserve the atmosphere which is familiar enough from the preceding century, and themes of classical mythology and history, allegories of the virtues and the arts, personalities of the ruling family and scenes from the life of the court continue to be favoured as themes for artistic representation, but the old novels are hardly used at all as source-books.⁷⁶ Painting is not a suitable medium for the ironic treatment of any subject. We possess instructive example of court art of the Quattrocento in two important places: the mural paintings of Francesco Cossa in the Palazzo Schifanoja in Ferrara and the frescoes by Mantegna in Mantua. In Ferrara the connection with late Gothic French art, in Mantua with the Italian naturalism of the time, is stronger; but in both cases the difference from the middle-class art of the same period is more thematic

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than formal. Cossa is not fundamentally different from Pesellino, and Mantegna describes life at the court of Ludovico Gonzaga with almost as direct a naturalism as, to quote one example, Ghirlandajo the life of the patricians of Florence. The differences between the artistic taste of the two circles were mutually adjusted to a very large extent.

The social function of court life is to enlist the support and adherence of the public for the ruling house. The Renaissance princes want to delude not only the people, they also want to make an impression on the nobility and bind it to the court.⁷⁷ But they are not dependent on either its services or its company; they can use anyone, of whatever descent, provided he is useful.⁷⁸ Consequently, the Italian courts of the Renaissance differ from the medieval courts in their very constitution; they accept into their circle upstart adventurers and merchants who have made money, plebeian humanists and ill-bred artists—entirely as if they had all the traditional social qualifications. In contrast to the exclusive moral community of court chivalry, a comparatively free, fundamentally intellectual type of *salon* life develops at these courts which is, on the one hand, the continuation of the aesthetic social culture of middle-class circles, such as described in the *Decamerone* and in the *Paradiso degli Alberti*, and represent, on the other, the preparatory stage in the development of those literary *salons* which play such an important part in the intellectual life of Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although women participate in literary social life from the very beginning, they are not the centre of the courtly *salons* of the Renaissance; and later on, in the age of the middle-class *salon*, they become the centre in quite a different sense than in the age of chivalry. Incidentally, the cultural importance of women is only another expression of the rationalism of the Renaissance. They are regarded as the intellectual equals of men, but not as their superiors. 'Everything that men can understand, can also be understood by women', to quote from the *Cortegiano*; but the gallantry which Castiglione demands of the courtier has no longer much in common with the woman-worship of the knights. The Renaissance is a masculine age; women like Lucrezia Borgia, who kept court in Nepi, or even Isabella d'Este, who was the

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centre of the court in Ferrara and Mantua, and who not only had a stimulating influence on the poets of her entourage but also seems to have been a connoisseur of the plastic arts, are exceptions. Nearly everywhere the leading patrons and friends of art are men.

The court life of medieval chivalry created a new system of morality, new ideals of heroism and humanity. The Italian courts of the Renaissance do not aim so high; their contribution to social culture is limited to that conception of refinement which, further developed by Spanish influences, reaches France in the sixteenth century, there becoming the basis of court culture and the pattern for the whole of Europe. As far as artistic matters are concerned, the courts of the Quattrocento created hardly anything new. The art which owes its origin to the princes of this period is neither better nor worse in quality than the art which the urban middle classes initiate. The choice of artist probably depends more often on local conditions than on the personal taste and tendency of the patron, but it is worth mentioning that Sigismondo Malatesta, one of the most cruel despots of the Renaissance, employs the greatest painter of the age, Piero della Francesca, and that Mantegna, the most important painter of the following generation, works not for the great Lorenzo Medici but for the petty prince Ludovico Gonzaga. That does not by any means imply that these princes were in the nature of infallible connoisseurs. They possessed just as many second- and third-rate things as did the middle-class lovers of art. On closer examination, the thesis of a universal appreciation of art in the Renaissance proves to be as untenable a legend as that of the uniformly high level of its artistic output. Balanced standards of taste were not achieved even in the upper classes of society, let alone in the lower. Nothing is more typical of the predominant artistic taste of the time than the fact that Pinturicchio, the elegant, but rather superficial painter of decoration, was the busiest artist of his time. But is it even permissible to speak at all of a universal interest in art, in the way in which the usual accounts of the Renaissance do? Did both 'high and low' really take an equal share in matters of art? Was it really 'the whole city' which was enthusiastic about the plan for a Cathedral dome in Florence? Was the preparation of a

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work of art really 'an event for the whole population of the city'? Of what classes did this 'whole' population consist? Did it include the starving workers? Hardly very likely. Did it include the petty bourgeoisie? Perhaps. But, in any case, the interest of the broader masses in the concerns of art will have been more religious and parochial than purely artistic. One must not forget that at that time public affairs still took place very largely in the streets. But a carnival procession, a state reception, a funeral, certainly aroused no less interest than the publicly exhibited cartoon of Leonardo, which, as we are told, the public crowded to see for two days long. Most of them will have had no inkling of the qualitative difference between the art of Leonardo and that of his contemporaries, even though the gulf between quality and popularity was certainly not so wide as it is today. The gulf was only just appearing; it could still be bridged on occasion—the artistically valuable was not yet the exclusive possession of the initiated. There is no doubt that the artists of the Renaissance enjoyed a certain measure of popularity; the great number of stories and anecdotes about artists that were in circulation is evidence of that. This popularity was bestowed, however, not on the artists as such, but, above all, on the publicly employed personalities, who took part in competitions, exhibited their works, preoccupied the commissions of the guilds and attracted attention merely by the uncommon features of their profession.

In spite of the relatively big demand for art which existed in cities like Florence and Siena at the time of the Renaissance, it is not possible to speak of a popular art in the sense that one can speak of the popular poetry of the religious hymns, of the 'rap-presentazioni sacre' and of the popular ballads into which the novels of chivalry degenerated. Peasant art certainly did exist, as did also a widespread production by bunglers, intended for popular consumption, but real works of art were, despite their comparative cheapness, beyond the means of the great majority of the population. It has been ascertained that towards the end of the 1470's, 84 workshops for wood-carving and tarsia-work, 54 for decorative work in marble and stone, 44 gold- and silver-smith workshops, were operating in Florence;⁷⁹ we have no records of the numbers of painters and sculptors in employment at the same

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time, but the guild register of the painters in Florence between 1409 and 1499 shows 41 names.⁸⁰ A comparison of these figures with the number of craftsmen employed in other trades—the fact, for example, that there were at one and the same time 84 wood-carvers and 70 butchers in Florence⁸¹—is sufficient to give an idea of the contemporary expenditure on art. On the other hand, the identifiable artists account for only a third or even only a fourth of the masters whose names are entered in the guild registers.⁸² Of the 32 painters who had a workshop of their own in Siena in 1428, we know only nine.⁸³ Most of them will probably not have been individually recognizable personalities in any case, and will, like Neri di Bicci, have concentrated on mass production. The business affairs of these undertakings, of which we have exact information in the records of Neri di Bicci,⁸⁴ prove that the feeling for quality of the public interested in art was not anything like so reliable as it is usually credited to have been. The majority of the public bought inferior goods of only average quality. To judge by what is said about the Renaissance in the text-books, one might imagine that it was good form to possess works of art, and that it was the general rule to find such works at least in the homes of the well-to-do middle class. But to all appearance that was by no means the case. Giov. Batt. Armenini, an art critic of the second half of the sixteenth century, remarks that he knows many good homes in which there was no sign of a picture of passable quality.⁸⁵

The Renaissance was not a civilization of small shopkeepers and artisans, nor of a well-to-do, half-educated middle class, but rather the jealously guarded possession of a highbrow and Latinized élite. This consisted mainly of those classes of society which were associated with the humanistic and Neoplatonic movement—a uniform and, on the whole, like-minded intelligentsia, such as, for example, the clergy, taken as a totality, had never been. The important works of art were intended for this circle. The broader masses either had no knowledge at all of them or appreciated them inadequately and from a non-artistic point of view, finding their own aesthetic pleasure in inferior products. This was the origin of that unbridgeable gulf between an educated minority and an uneducated majority which had never been

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known before to this extent and which was to be such a decisive factor in the whole future development of art. The civilization of the Middle Ages was not that of a standardized community either and the upholders of culture in classical times were even fully aware of their distance from the masses, but in neither of these periods was it the intention, with the exception of occasional small groups, deliberately to create the culture of an exclusive élite, to which the majority were debarred from having access. This is the fundamental change which occurs in the Renaissance. The language of the ecclesiastical culture of the Middle Ages was Latin, because the Church was still organically related to the civilization of late Roman times; but the humanists wrote Latin, because they wanted to break with the popular tendencies of the Middle Ages and the different national languages in which they were expressed, and to create a cultural monopoly for themselves, as a kind of new priestly caste. The artists place themselves under the protection and spiritual guardianship of this group. In other words, they emancipate themselves from the Church and the guilds, only to become dependent on the goodwill of a group which claims for itself the authority of both the Church and the guilds. For the humanistic literati are now not only considered to be the absolute authority on all iconographic questions of historical or mythological relevance, but they also begin to specialize in questions of a formal and technical nature. In the end, the artists submit themselves to their judgement in matters in which previously only tradition and guild regulations had been authoritative guides, and in which no layman was allowed to have a say at all. The price of their independence of the Church and the guilds, the price which they have to pay for their social ascent, for success and fame, is partly the acknowledgement of the humanist as the supreme judge in matters of art. The humanists are, of course, by no means all qualified critics and connoisseurs, but amongst their number are the first laymen with some idea of the criteria of true quality in art and who are capable of judging works of art on purely aesthetic grounds. They, as the section of the public which is really capable of forming a judgement, are the beginning of the art public in our modern sense of the term.⁸⁴

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3. THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE RENAISSANCE ARTIST

The increased demands for works of art in the Renaissance leads to the ascent of the artist from the level of the petty bourgeois artisan to that of the free intellectual worker, a class which had previously never had any roots but which now began to develop into an economically secure and socially consolidated, even though by no means uniform group. The artists of the early Quattrocento are still entirely small folk; they are regarded as higher-grade craftsmen and their social origins and education do not make them any different from the petty bourgeois elements of the guilds. Andrea del Castagno is a peasant's son, Paolo Uccello the son of a barber, Filippo Lippi the son of a butcher, the Pollajuoli the sons of a poulterer. They are named after the occupation of their father, their birthplace or their master, and they are treated as familiarly as domestics. They are subject to the rules of the guild, and it is by no means their talent which entitles them to practise as professional artists, but the course of instruction completed according to guild regulations. Their education is based on the same principles as that of the ordinary craftsmen; they are trained not in schools, but in workshops, and the instruction is practical, not theoretical. After having acquired the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, they are apprenticed to a master while still children and they usually spend many years with him. We know that even Perugino, Andrea del Sarto and Fra Bartolommeo were apprenticed for eight to ten years. Most of the artists of the Renaissance, including Brunelleschi, Donatello, Ghiberti, Uccello, Antonio Pollajuolo, Verrocchio, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli and Francia, started in the goldsmith's workshop, which has rightly been called the art school of the century. Many sculptors begin work with stonemasons and ornamental carvers just as their medieval predecessors had done. Even when he is received into the Luke Guild, Donatello is still described as a 'goldsmith and stonemason', and what he himself thinks about the relation between art and craft is best shown by the fact that he plans one of his last and most important works, the group of Judith and Holofernes, as a decoration for the fountain in the courtyard of the Palazzo Riccardi. But the leading

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artists' shops of the early Renaissance introduce, despite their still fundamentally artisan-like organization, more individual teaching methods. That applies, above all, to the workshop of Verrocchio, Pollajuolo and Ghirlandajo in Florence, of Francesco Squarcione in Padua and Giovanni Bellini in Venice, of which the leaders are just as important and famous as teachers as they are as artists. Apprentices no longer enter the first workshop that they come across, but go to a particular master, by whom they are received in greater numbers the more famous and sought after he is as an artist. For these boys are, if not always the best, at least the cheapest source of labour; and that is probably the main reason for the more intensive art education which is to be observed from now on, not the masters' ambition to be considered good teachers.

The course of instruction begins, still following the medieval tradition, with all kinds of odd jobs, such as the preparation of colours, repairing brushes and the priming of the pictures; it then extends to transferring the individual compositions from the cartoon to the panel, the execution of the various parts of garments and the less important parts of the body, and finishes with the completion of whole works from mere sketches and instructions. Thus the apprentice develops into the more or less independent assistant, who must be differentiated, however, from the pupil. For not all the assistants of a master are his own pupils, and not all pupils remain with their teacher as assistants. The assistant is often on the same level as the master, but also often merely an impersonal tool in the hands of the workshop-owner. As a consequence of the various combinations of these possibilities and the frequent co-operation of the master, the assistants and the pupils, there arises not only a mixture of styles which is difficult to analyse, but sometimes even an actual balancing of the individual differences, a communal form, on which, above all, the tradition of craftsmanship has a decisive influence. The circumstance which is familiar—whether it is truth or fiction—from artists' biographies of the Renaissance, that the master gives up painting because one of his pupils has outstripped him (Cimabue-Giotto, Verrocchio-Leonardo, Francia-Raphael), must either represent a later stage of development in which the workshop community

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was already in process of dissolution, or, as for example in the case of Verrocchio and Leonardo, there must be a more realistic explanation than is given in the anecdotes about these artists. Verrocchio probably stops painting and restricts himself to the execution of plastic works, after he has convinced himself that he can safely entrust the painting commissions to an assistant like Leonardo.⁸⁷

The artist's studio of the early Renaissance is still dominated by the communal spirit of the masons' lodge and the guild workshop; the work of art is not yet the expression of an independent personality, emphasizing his individuality and excluding himself from all extraneous influences. The claim independently to shape the whole work from the first stroke to the last and the inability to co-operate with pupils and assistants are first noticeable in Michelangelo, who, in this respect too, is the first modern artist. Until the end of the fifteenth century the artistic labour process still takes place entirely in collective forms.⁸⁸ In order to cope with extensive undertakings, above all, great works of sculpture, factory-like organizations are started with many assistants and handymen. Thus in Ghiberti's studio up to twenty assistants are employed during the work on the Baptistry doors, which are among the greatest tasks to be commissioned in the Quattrocento. Of the painters, Ghirlandajo and Pinturicchio maintain a whole staff of assistants while they are working on their great frescoes. Ghirlandajo's workshop, in which above all his brothers and brother-in-law are engaged as permanent collaborators, is, along with the studios of the Pollajuoli and the della Robbia, one of the great family businesses of the century. There also exist owners of studios who are more business men than artists, and who usually accept commissions only in order to have them carried out by a suitable painter. Evangelista da Predis in Milan seems to have been one of these. For a time, he also employed Leonardo. Apart from these business-like forms of collective labour, we encounter in the Quattrocento the partnership of two usually still young artists, running a common workshop, because they cannot afford the expense of an independent undertaking. Thus, for example, Donatello and Michelozzo, Fra Bartolommeo and Albertinelli, Andrea del Sarto and Franciabigio, work together. Everywhere

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we still find superpersonal forms of organization preventing the atomization of artistic work. The tendency to intellectual amalgamation makes itself felt both in the horizontal and in the vertical direction. The representative personalities of the age form long uninterrupted successions of names which, as, for example, in the case of the master-pupil sequence: Fra Angelico—Benozzo Gozzoli—Cosimo Rosselli—Piero di Cosimo—Andrea del Sarto—Pontormo—Bronzino, make the main development seem to be that of an absolutely continuous tradition.

The spirit of craftsmanship which dominates the Quattrocento is expressed, above all, in the fact that the artists' studios often take on minor orders of a purely technical nature. From the records of Neri di Bicci we learn what a vast amount of handicraft goods is produced in one busy painter's workshop; apart from pictures, armorial bearings, flags, shop signs, tarsia-works, painted wood-carvings, patterns for carpet weavers and embroiderers, decorative objects for festive occasions and many other things are turned out. Even after he has become a distinguished painter and sculptor, Antonio Pollajuolo runs a goldsmith's workshop and in his studio, apart from sculpture and goldsmith work, cartoons for tapestries and sketches for engravings are drafted. Even at the height of his career, Verrocchio takes on the most varied terracotta work and wood-carving. For his patron Martelli, Donatello makes not only the well-known coat of arms but also a silver mirror. Luca della Robbia manufactures majolica tiles for churches and private houses, Botticelli draws patterns for embroideries and Squarcione is the owner of an embroidery workshop. Of course, one must discriminate both according to the stage of historical development and the standing of the individual artists and not run away with the idea that Ghirlandajo and Botticelli painted shop signs for the baker or the butcher round the corner; such orders will no longer have been executed in their workshop at all. On the other hand, the painting of guild flags, wedding chests and bridal plates was not felt to be a degrading occupation for the artist. Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Piero di Cosimo, are active as painters of *cassoni* right into the period of the Cinquecento. A fundamental change in the generally accepted criteria of artistic work does not begin to make itself felt until the

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period of Michelangelo. Vasari no longer considers the acceptance of mere handicraft work compatible with the self-respect of an artist. This stage also signifies the end of the dependence of artists on the guilds. The outcome of the proceedings of the Genoese painters' guild against the painter Giovanni Battista Poggi, who was to be prevented from practising his art in Genoa, because he had not undergone the prescribed seven-years course of instruction there, is of symptomatic importance. The year 1590, in which this case took place and which brought the fundamental decision that the guild statutes were not binding on artists who did not keep an open shop, brings to a close a development of nearly two hundred years.⁸⁹

The artists of the early Renaissance are also economically on an equal footing with the petty bourgeois tradesman. Their situation is in general not brilliant, but neither is it exactly precarious. No artist is as yet in a position to live like a lord, but, on the other hand, there exists nothing that one could call an artistic proletariat. It is true that in their income-tax declarations the painters are constantly complaining about their difficult financial circumstances, but such documents can certainly not be considered the most trustworthy of historical sources. Masaccio asserts that he cannot even pay his apprentice, and we know for a fact that he died poor and in debt.⁹⁰ According to Vasari, Filippo Lippi could not buy himself a pair of stockings, and in his old age, Paolo Uccello complains that he owns nothing, cannot work any longer and has a sick wife. Those artists were still best off who were in the service of a court or a patron. For example, Fra Angelico received fifteen ducats a month at the curia, at a time when on 300 a year one could live in grand style in Florence, where the cost of living was anyhow somewhat lower.⁹¹ It is characteristic that prices remained in general on a medium level and that even the well-known masters were not much better paid than the average artist and the higher-grade craftsman. Personalities like Donatello probably received somewhat higher fees, but 'fancy prices' were still non-existent.⁹² Gentile da Fabriano received 150 florins for his 'Adoration of the Magi', Benozzo Gozzoli 60 for an altar-piece, Filippo Lippi 40 for a Madonna, but Botticelli already received 75 for his.⁹³ Ghiberti drew a fixed salary of 200

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florins a year while he was working on the doors of the Baptistry, whereas the Chancellor of the Signoria received 600 florins out of which he was also obliged to pay four clerks. In the same period, a good copyist of manuscripts received 30 florins in addition to full board. Artists were, accordingly, not exactly badly paid, even though not anything like so well as the famous literati and university teachers, who often received 500 to 2000 florins per annum.⁹⁴ The whole art market still moved within comparatively narrow limits; the artists had to demand interim payments during the work and even the employer could often pay for the materials only by instalments.⁹⁵ The princes also had to fight against shortage of ready money, and Leonardo complains repeatedly to his patron Ludovico Moro about not having received his fee.⁹⁶ The handicraft character of artistic work was expressed not least in the fact that the artists were in receipt of a regular wage from their employers. In the case of larger-scale artistic undertakings, all cash expenditure, that is to say, both the cost of the materials, the wages and often even the board and lodging of the assistants and apprentices, was borne by the employer, and the master himself was paid according to the time spent on the work. Wage-work remained the general rule in painting until the end of the fifteenth century; only later was this method of compensation limited to purely artisan jobs, such as restorations and copying.⁹⁷

As the artistic profession breaks away from pure craftsmanship, all the conditions set down in work contracts are gradually altered. In a contract with Ghirlandajo, dated 1485, the price of the colours to be used is still particularized; but according to a contract with Filippino Lippi, dated 1487, the artist already has to bear the cost of the materials, and a similar agreement is made with Michelangelo in 1498. It is, of course, impossible to draw an absolute dividing-line here, but the change occurs, at any rate, towards the end of the century, and is again connected most conspicuously with the person of Michelangelo. In the Quattrocento it was still the general custom to require the artist to provide a guarantor to stand surety for the observance of the contract; with Michelangelo this guarantee becomes a mere formality. Thus, in one case, the writer of the contract himself acts as a guarantor

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for both sides.⁹⁸ The other obligations binding on the artist are defined more and more loosely and vaguely in the contracts. In a contract of the year 1524, Sebastiano del Piombo is left free to choose any subject he likes for a painting, on the sole condition that it shall not be the picture of a saint; and in 1531, the same collector orders a work from Michelangelo and it is left entirely to the artist to decide whether it shall be a painting or a piece of sculpture.

From the very beginning, artists were better placed in Renaissance Italy than in other countries, not so much as a result of the more highly developed forms of urban life—the bourgeois milieu in itself offered them no better opportunities than the ordinary craftsmen—but because the Italian princes and despots were better able to use and appreciate their gifts than foreign rulers. The fact that the Italian artists were less dependent on the guilds, which was the basis of their favoured position, is above all the result of their being frequently employed at the courts. In the North the master is tied to one city, but in Italy the artist often moves from court to court, from city to city, and this nomadic life already leads to a certain relaxation of guild regulations, which are based on local conditions and are only workable within local limits. As the princes attached importance to attracting to their courts not only highly skilled masters in general, but also particular artists who were often foreign to the locality, the latter had to be freed from the restrictions of guild statutes. They could not be forced to take local craft regulations into consideration in the execution of their commissions, to apply for a labour permit from the local guild authority and to ask how many assistants and apprentices they were allowed to employ. After they had finished their work for one employer, they went with their assistants into the employment and protection of another and again enjoyed the same exceptional rights. These travelling court painters were beyond the reach of the guilds from the very outset. But the privileges which artists enjoyed at the courts could not remain without effect on the way they were treated in the towns, particularly as the same masters were often employed in both places and the towns had to keep pace with the competition of the courts if they wanted to attract the best artists.

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The emancipation of the artists from the guilds is, therefore, not the result of their own heightened self-respect and the acknowledgement of their claim to be considered on an equal footing with the poets and scholars, but results from the fact that their services are needed and have to be competed for. Their self-respect is merely the expression of their market-value.

The social ascent of the artists is expressed first of all in the fees they receive. In the last quarter of the fifteenth century relatively high prices begin to be paid in Florence for fresco paintings. In 1485, Giovanni Tornabuoni agrees to pay Ghirlandajo a fee of 1,100 florins for painting the family chapel in S. Maria Novella. For his frescoes in S. Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, Filippino Lippi receives 2,000 gold ducats, which corresponds approximately to the same sum in florins. And Michelangelo receives 3,000 ducats for the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.⁹⁹ Towards the end of the century several artists are already doing well financially; Filippino Lippi even amasses a considerable fortune. Perugino owns houses, Benedetto da Majano an estate. Leonardo draws an annual salary of 2,000 ducats in Milan and in France he receives 35,000 francs per annum.¹⁰⁰ The celebrated masters of the Cinquecento, especially Raphael and Titian, enjoy a considerable income and lead a lordly life. Michelangelo's way of life is outwardly modest, it is true, but his income, too, is high, and when he refuses to accept payment for his work in S. Peter's, he is already a wealthy man. In addition to the increasing demand for works of art and the general rising of prices, the fact that round the turn of the century the papal curia comes more into prominence on the art market, and becomes a more serious rival to the Florentine public interested in art, must have had the biggest influence on the ascending scale of artists' fees. A whole series of artists now move from Florence to magnanimous Rome. Naturally, those left behind profit from the high offers of the papal court—that is to say, only the more distinguished artists really profit, those whom an effort is made to keep back. The prices paid to the others lag considerably behind the fees paid in the best market, and now, for the first time, there begin to be real differences in the payments made to artists.¹⁰¹

The emancipation of the painters and sculptors from the

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fetters of the guilds and their ascent from the level of the artisan to that of the poet and scholar has been attributed to their alliance with the humanists; the humanists' support for them, on the other hand, has been explained by the fact that the literary and artistic monuments of antiquity formed an indivisible unity in the eyes of these enthusiasts, and that they were convinced that the poets and artists of classical antiquity were held in equal regard.¹⁰² In fact, they would have considered it unthinkable that the creators of the works which they regarded with a common reverence because of their common origin should have been judged differently by their contemporaries. And they made their own age—and the whole of posterity right into the nineteenth century—believe that the artist, who had never been anything more than a mere mechanic in the eyes of antiquity, shared the honours of divine favour with the poet. There is no question that the humanists were very useful to the artists of the Renaissance in their efforts to achieve emancipation; the humanists confirmed them in the position they had won for themselves thanks to the favourable market, and they gave them the weapons with which to assert their claims against the guilds, and partly also against the resistance of the conservative, artistically inferior and, therefore, vulnerable elements in their own ranks. But the protection of the literati was by no means the reason for the social ascent of the artist; it was rather itself merely a symptom of the development which followed from the fact that—as a consequence of the rise of new seigniories and principalities, on the one hand, and the growth and enriching of the towns, on the other—the disproportion between supply and demand on the art market became ever smaller and began to achieve a perfect balance. It is a well-known fact that the whole guild movement had its origin in the attempt to prevent such a disproportion in the interest of the producers; the guild authorities only connived at the infringement of their statutes when shortage of work no longer seemed a menace. The artists owed their independence not to the goodwill of the humanists, but to the fact that this danger became increasingly insignificant. They also desired the friendship of the humanists, not in order to break the resistance of the guilds, but to justify the economic position they had already won for them-

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selves in the eyes of the humanistically-minded upper class and in order to enlist the scientific advisers, whose help they needed in their fashioning of marketable mythological and historical subjects. For the artists the humanists were the guarantors of their intellectual status, and the humanists themselves recognized the value of art as a means of propaganda for the ideas on which their own intellectual supremacy was based. It was this mutual relationship which first gave rise to that conception of the unity of the arts which we take for granted, but which was unknown before the Renaissance. Plato is not the only one to make a fundamental distinction between the visual arts and poetry; even in the later years of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages, it occurred to no one to assume that there was any closer relationship between art and poetry than there was between science and poetry or between philosophy and art.

Medieval literature on art was limited to recipe books. No hard-and-fast line of any kind was drawn between art and craft in these practical manuals. Even Cennino Cennini's treatise on painting was still dominated by the ideas of the guilds and based on the guild conception of excellence in craftsmanship; he exhorted the artists to be industrious, obedient and persevering, and saw in the 'imitation' of the paragons the most certain way to mastery. All this was on the old medieval-traditionalist lines. The replacing of the imitation of the masters by the study of nature is first accomplished theoretically by Leonardo da Vinci, but he was merely expressing the victory of naturalism and rationalism over tradition which had been won long since in practice. His theory of art, which is based on the study of nature, shows that in the interim the relationship between master and pupil has completely changed. The emancipation of art from the spirit of pure craftsmanship had to begin with the alteration of the old system of apprenticeship and the abolition of the teaching monopoly of the guilds. As long as the right to practise as a professional artist was conditional on apprenticeship under a guild master, neither the influence of the guilds nor the supremacy of the craft tradition could be broken.¹⁰³ The education of the rising generation in art had to be transferred from the workshop to the school, and practical had to yield partly to theoretical instruction, in

order to remove the obstacles which the old system put in the way of young talent. Of course, the new system gradually created new ties and new obstacles. The process begins by the authority of the masters being replaced by the ideal of nature, and ends with the finished body of doctrine represented by academic instruction, in which the place of the old discredited models is taken by new, just as strictly limited, but from now on scientifically based ideals. Incidentally, the scientific method of art education begins in the workshops themselves. Already in the early Quattrocento apprentices are made familiar with the rudiments of geometry, perspective and anatomy in addition to the practical instruction, and introduced to drawing from life and from puppets. The masters organize courses in their workshops and this institution gives rise, on the one hand, to the private academies with their combination of practical and theoretical instruction,¹⁰⁴ and, on the other, to the public academies in which the old workshop community and craft tradition are abolished and replaced by a purely intellectual teacher-pupil relationship. Workshop instruction and the private academies maintain themselves through the whole Cinquecento, but they gradually lose their influence on the formation of style.

The scientific conception of art, which forms the basis of instruction in the academies, begins with Leon Battista Alberti. He is the first to express the idea that mathematics is the common ground of art and the sciences, as both the theory of proportions and of perspective are mathematical disciplines. He is also the first to give clear expression to that union of the experimental technician and the observing artist which had already been achieved in practice by Masaccio and Uccello.¹⁰⁵ Both try to comprehend the world empirically and to derive rational laws from this experience of the world; both endeavour to know and to control nature; both are distinguished from the purely contemplative, scholastically confined university teacher by reason of their creative activity—a *poicin*. But if the technician and the natural scientist now has a claim to be considered an intellectual on the basis of his mathematical knowledge, the artist, who is often identical with the technician and the scientist, may also well expect to be distinguished from the craftsman and to have the

medium in which he expresses himself regarded as one of the 'free arts'.

Leonardo does not add any new basic ideas to Alberti's statements, in which art is raised to the stature of a science and the artist placed on a level with the humanist; he merely stresses and increases the claims of his predecessor. Painting, he maintains, is, on the one hand, a kind of exact natural science; on the other, it is superior to the sciences, for these are 'imitable', that is, impersonal, whereas art is tied to the individual and his inborn abilities.¹⁰⁶ Leonardo, therefore, justifies the claim of painting to be considered one of the 'free arts' not only on the basis of the artist's mathematical knowledge but also on account of his talent, which, according to Leonardo, is equal to that of the poetic genius. He renews the dictum attributed to Simonides, which refers to painting as a 'silent poetry' and poetry as a 'speaking painting', and he thereby opens that long controversy about the order of precedence in the arts to which Lessing was later to contribute. Leonardo thinks that if the muteness of painting is regarded as a defect, then one might just as well speak of the blindness of poetry.¹⁰⁷ An artist in closer touch with the humanists would never have had the presumption to make such a heretical assertion.

A higher assessment of the value of painting, rising above the medieval workmanlike point of view, is to be noted even in the early forerunners of humanism. Dante erects an imperishable monument to the masters Cimabue and Giotto (*Purg.* XI, 94/96), and compares them with poets like Guido Guinicelli and Guido Cavalcanti. In his sonnets, Petrarch praises the painter Simone Martini, and in his eulogy of Florence, Filippo Villani also mentions several artists among the famous men of the city. The *novelle* of the Italian Renaissance, above all those of Boccaccio and Sacchetti, contain a wealth of anecdotes about artists. And although art itself plays the smallest part in these stories, it is characteristic that the artists as such seem to be interesting enough to the story-tellers to warrant their being lifted out of the anonymous existence of the ordinary craftsman and treated as individual personalities. The first half of the Quattrocento already sees the beginnings of the artist's biography, which is such

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a typical product of the Italian Renaissance. Brunelleschi is the first artist to have his life written by a contemporary; such a distinction had previously been confined to princes, heroes and saints. Ghiberti writes the first autobiography which we possess by an artist. In honour of Brunelleschi the commune has a sepulchral monument erected in the Cathedral, and Lorenzo desires the remains of Filippo Lippi to be brought home from Spoleto and to be buried with full honours. He is told in reply, however, that it is regretted, but Spoleto is much poorer in great men than Florence and his wish cannot, therefore, be fulfilled. All this is the expression of an unmistakable shift of attention from the works to the personality of the artist. Men begin to be conscious of creative power in the modern sense and there are increasing signs of the rising self-respect of the artist. We possess signatures of nearly all the important painters of the Quattrocento, and Filarete actually expresses a wish that all artists should sign their works. But even more characteristic than this custom is the fact that most of these painters also leave behind self-portraits, although they are not always self-contained pictures. The artists portray themselves and sometimes their family as well as bystanders beside the founders and patrons, the Madonna and her saints. Thus on a fresco in the church of S. Maria Novella, Ghirlandajo depicts his own relations opposite the founder and his wife, and the city of Perugia even commissions Perugino to put his self-portrait beside his frescoes in the Cambio. Gentile da Fabriano receives the patrician toga from the republic of Venice; the city of Bologna elects Francesco Francia to the office of Gonfaloniere; Florence bestows on Michelozzo the exalted title of Member of the Council.¹⁰⁸

One of the most significant tokens of the new self-consciousness of artists and of their changed attitude to their own work is the fact that they begin to emancipate themselves from direct commissions, and, on the one hand, no longer carry out their orders with the old conscientiousness, and, on the other, often undertake artistic tasks of their own accord without any outside commission. Filippo Lippi is already known not always to have kept to the continuous and uniform rate which was the general rule in craft work and to have left certain commissions on one

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side for a time, in order to apply himself to others on the spur of the moment. After his time, we come across this rhapsodic method of working more and more frequently,¹⁰⁰ and in Perugino we already meet a spoilt 'star' who treat his employers quite badly; neither in the Palazzo Vecchio nor in the Ducal Palace in Venice does he carry out the work he has taken on and he makes Orvieto wait so long for the promised painting of the Chapel of the Madonna in the Cathedral that the commune finally entrusts Signorelli with the execution of the work. The gradual ascent of the artist is mirrored most clearly of all in the career of Leonardo, who is, no doubt, esteemed in Florence but still not particularly busy there, who then becomes the pampered court painter of Ludovico Moro, and Cesare Borgias's first military engineer, whilst he ends his life as the favourite and intimate friend of the French king. The fundamental change occurs at the beginning of the Cinquecento. From then onwards the famous masters are no longer the protégés of patrons, but great lords themselves. According to Vasari, Raphael leads the life of a grand seigneur, not that of a painter; he resides in his own palace in Rome, associates with princes and cardinals as equals; Baldassare Castiglione and Agostino Chigi are his friends, a niece of Cardinal Bibbiena is his bride. And Titian climbs even higher up the social ladder. His reputation as the most sought-after master of his time, his way of life, his rank, his titles, raise him into the highest circles of society. Emperor Charles V appoints him a Count of the Lateran Palace and a member of the Imperial Court, makes him a Knight of the Golden Spur and bestows on him a whole series of privileges together with a hereditary nobility. Rulers make a great effort, often without success, to have their portraits painted by him; he has, as Aretino mentions, a princely income; every time he is painted by him, the Emperor gives him costly presents; his daughter Lavinia receives a magnificent dowry; Henry III pays the aged master a personal visit, and when he falls a victim to the plague in 1576, he is buried in the church of the Frari with the greatest honours the Republic can offer, in spite of the strict prohibition, otherwise always observed without exception, against burying a victim of the plague in a church. Michelangelo, finally, rises to absolutely unprecedented heights. His supremacy is so

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obvious that he can afford wholly to forgo all public honours, titles and distinctions. He scorns the friendship of princes and popes; he can dare to be their opponent. He is neither a count, nor a state councillor, nor a papal superintendent, but he is called the 'Divine'. He does not wish to be described as a painter or sculptor in letters addressed to him: he says he is simply Michelangelo Buonarroti, no more and no less; he desires to have young noblemen as his pupils, and, in his case, this must not be ascribed simply to snobbery; he maintains that he paints 'col cervello' and not 'colla mano', and would like best of all to conjure forth the figures from the marble block by the mere magic of his vision. This is more than the artist's inborn pride, more than the consciousness of being superior to the craftsman, the mere mechanic, the philistine; it is really evidence of a fear of coming into contact with ordinary reality. He is the first example of the modern, lonely, demonically impelled artist—the first to be completely possessed by his idea and for whom nothing exists but his idea—who feels a deep sense of responsibility towards his gifts and sees a higher and superhuman power in his own artistic genius. A degree of sovereignty is attained here, in the light of which all earlier conceptions of artistic freedom fade into nothingness. Now, for the first time, the full emancipation of the artist is achieved; now, for the first time, he becomes the genius such as we have known him to be since the Renaissance. The final change is now accomplished: it is no longer his art, but the man himself who is the object of veneration and who becomes a vogue. The world, whose glory it was his task to proclaim, now proclaims his glory; the cult of which he was the instrument is now applied to him; the state of divine favour is now transferred from his patrons and protectors to himself. At all times there had really existed a certain reciprocity of praise between the hero and the artist who proclaimed his glory, between the patron and the artist;¹¹⁰ the greater the fame of the panegyrist, the greater was the value of the glory which he proclaimed. But now the relationship is so sublimated that the patron is exalted by the very act of exalting the artist and praises the artist instead of being praised by him. Charles V stoops to recover the brush which Titian drops, and thinks that nothing is more natural than that a master like Titian

should be waited on by an emperor. The legend of the artist is complete. There is doubtless still an element of coquetry about it: the artist is allowed to swim in the light, so that the patron can shine in the reflection. But will the reciprocity of appreciation and praise, the mutual valuation and rewarding of services, the mutual protection of the other's interest, ever wholly cease? At the most, it will only become more veiled.

The fundamentally new element in the Renaissance conception of art is the discovery of the concept of genius, and the idea that the work of art is the creation of an autocratic personality, that this personality transcends tradition, theory and rules, even the work itself, is richer and deeper than the work and impossible to express adequately within any objective form. This idea remained foreign to the Middle Ages, which recognized no independent value in intellectual originality and spontaneity, recommended the imitation of the masters and considered plagiarism permissible, and which was, at the most, superficially touched but in no sense dominated by the idea of intellectual competition. The idea of genius as a gift of God, as an inborn and uniquely individual creative force, the doctrine of the personal and exceptional law which the genius is not only permitted to but must follow, the justification of the individuality and wilfulness of the artist of genius—this whole trend of thought first arises in Renaissance society, which, owing to its dynamic nature and permeation with the idea of competition, offers the individual better opportunities than the authoritarian culture of the Middle Ages, and which, owing to the increased need for publicity felt by the holders of power, creates a greater demand in the art market than the supply had had to meet in the past. But just as the modern idea of competition reaches back deep into the Middle Ages, so the medieval idea of art as determined by objective, superpersonal factors continues to have an after-effect for a long time and the subjectivist conception of artistic activity makes only very slow progress even after the end of the Middle Ages. The individualistic conception of the Renaissance, therefore, requires correction in two directions. Burckhardt's thesis is not, however, to be dismissed out of hand, for if strong personalities already existed in the Middle Ages,¹¹¹ yet to think and act

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individually is one thing and to be conscious of one's individuality, to affirm and deliberately to intensify it, is another. One cannot speak of individualism in the modern sense of the term until a reflexive individual consciousness takes the place of a mere individual reaction. The self-recollection of individuality does not begin until the Renaissance, but the Renaissance does not itself begin with the self-recollecting individuality. The expression of personality in art had been sought after and appreciated long before anyone had realized that art was based no longer on an objective What but on a subjective How. Long after it had become a self-confession, people still continued to talk about the objective truth in art, although it was precisely the self-expressionism in art which enabled it to win through to general recognition. The power of personality, the intellectual energy and spontaneity of the individual, is the great experience of the Renaissance; genius as the embodiment of this energy and spontaneity becomes the ideal, in which it finds the supreme expression of the nature of the human mind and its power over reality.

The development of the concept of genius begins with the idea of intellectual property. In the Middle Ages both this conception and the desire for originality are lacking; both are directly interrelated. As long as art is nothing but the representation of the Divine and the artist only the medium through which the eternal, supernatural order of things is made visible, there can be no question of autonomy in art nor of the artist actually owning his work. The obvious suggestion is to connect the idea of intellectual property with the beginnings of capitalism, but to do so would only be misleading. The idea of intellectual productivity and intellectual property follows from the disintegration of Christian culture. As soon as religion ceases to control and unite within itself all the spheres of spiritual life, the idea of the autonomy of the various forms of intellectual expression appears, and an art which bears its meaning and purpose within itself becomes conceivable. In spite of all attempts to base the whole of culture, including art, on religion, no later age has ever succeeded in restoring the cultural unity of the Middle Ages and depriving art of its autonomy. Even when it is placed in the service of extra-artistic purposes, art now remains enjoyable and

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significant in itself. But if one ceases to regard the separate intellectual moulds as so many different forms of one and the same truth, then the idea also occurs of making their individuality and originality the criterion of their value. The Trecento is still completely under the spell of *one* master—Giotto—and of his tradition; but in the Quattrocento individualistic efforts begin to make their mark in all directions. Originality becomes a weapon in the competitive struggle. The social process now seizes on an instrument which it has not itself produced, but which it adapts to its purposes and of which it heightens the effectiveness. As long as the opportunities on the art market remain favourable for the artist, the cultivation of individuality does not develop into a mania for originality—this does not happen until the age of mannerism, when new conditions on the art market create painful economic disturbances for the artist. But the ideal of the 'original genius' itself does not appear until the eighteenth century, when, in the transition from private patronage to the free, unprotected market, artists have to wage a sterner fight for their material existence than ever before.

The most important step in the development of the concept of the genius is from the idea of actual achievement to that of the mere capacity to achieve, from the work to the person of the artist, from the appreciation of full success to that of mere intention and idea. This step could only have been taken by an age which had come to regard a personal style as interesting and instructive in itself. The fact that the Quattrocento already contained certain preconditions of this attitude is shown by a passage in Filarete's treatise, where the forms of a work of art are compared to the pen-strokes of a manuscript, which immediately betray the hand of the writer.¹¹² The appreciation of and growing fondness for drawings, rough drafts, sketches, the *bozzetto*, for the unfinished work generally, is a further step in the same direction. The origin of the taste for the fragment is likewise to be found in the subjectivist conception of art based on the idea of the genius; the philosophy of art developed by a study of classical torsi merely intensified it. For the Renaissance, the drawing and the sketch became momentous not merely as artistic forms, but also as documents and records of the creative process

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in art; they were recognized to be a particular form of expression on their own, distinct from the finished work; they were valued because they revealed the process of artistic invention at its starting point, where it was almost completely merged with the subjectivity of the artist. Vasari mentions that Uccello left behind so many drawings that they filled whole chests. From the Middle Ages, on the contrary, hardly any drawings have come down to us. Apart from the fact that the medieval artist certainly did not ascribe the same importance to his momentary brain-waves as did later masters, and probably did not consider it worth while to record every fleeting idea, the reason for the rarity of extant medieval drawings may well be the fact that drawing only became widespread when usable and reasonably priced stocks of paper became available¹¹³ and that only a comparatively small proportion of the drawings actually done have survived. Old age is certainly not the only reason for their disappearance; it is obvious that less importance was attached to their preservation than later, and the whole difference between the art philosophy of the Middle Ages with its matter-of-fact, objective ways of thought and that of the subjectivistic Renaissance is cogently expressed in the medieval lack of interest in drawings. For the Middle Ages the value of the work of art was purely objective, whereas the Renaissance also attributed a personal value to it. The drawing became the direct formula of artistic creation, for it gave the most striking expression possible to the fragmentary, uncompleted and uncompletable element which adheres, in the final analysis, to every work of art. The raising of the mere capacity for achievement above the achievement itself, this fundamental feature of the concept of the genius, means that genius is regarded as not wholly realizable, and this explains why the incomplete drawing is considered a typical form of art.

It was only one step from the inability of the genius to communicate himself fully, to the misunderstood genius and to the appeal to posterity against the verdict of the contemporary world. The Renaissance never made this step. Not because it had more understanding of art than later ages against whose judgement unsuccessful artists have appealed, but because the artist's struggle

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for existence was still expressed in relatively harmless forms. Nevertheless, the concept of the genius already acquires certain dialectical characteristics; it already allows us a glimpse of the defensive machinery which the artist was to set in motion later on against the philistine to whom art is a closed book, on the one hand, and against the bunglers and dilettanti, on the other. Against the first named he was to shelter behind the mask of the eccentric, and against the latter he was to emphasize the inborn quality of his talent and the fact that art cannot be acquired by learning. Francisco de Hollanda already remarks in his *Conversations on Painting* (1548) that every important personality has something peculiar about him, and the idea that the genuine artist must be born was not even completely new at that time. The theory of the inspired quality of the genius, of the superpersonal and irrational nature of his performance, shows that it is an intellectual aristocracy which is in process of constitution here, an aristocracy which prefers to forego personal merit, *virtù*, in the sense in which the early Renaissance used the term, in order to define itself the more sharply against others.

The autonomy of art gives expression in an objective form—from the standpoint of the work—to the same idea which the concept of the genius expresses in a subjective form—from the standpoint of the artist. The idea that cultural forms are independent of external laws is the counterpart of the idea of the spontaneity of the mind. On the other hand, the autonomy of art signifies for the Renaissance merely independence of the Church and of the metaphysics propounded by the Church, it does not imply an absolute and universal autonomy. Art emancipates itself from ecclesiastical dogmas, but remains closely connected with the scientific philosophy of the age, just as the artist breaks away from the clergy but enters all the more intimately into relationship with the humanists and their followers. But art is far from becoming a servant of science in the sense in which it was the 'servant of theology' in the Middle Ages. It is and remains rather a sphere in which it is possible, in seclusion from the rest of the world, to organize one's intellectual life and indulge in intellectual pleasures of a quite peculiar kind. As one moves about in this world of art, one is separated both from the transcendent

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world of faith and from the world of practical affairs. Art can be made to serve the purposes of faith and be given problems to solve which are also the concern of science, but whatever extra-artistic functions it fulfils, it can always be considered as if it were itself its own object. This is the new point of view which the Middle Ages was not yet able and prepared to make its own. It does not mean, however, that before the Renaissance there was no feeling for and no enjoyment of the formal quality of a work of art, only such feeling and enjoyment was still unconscious and the work of art was judged, as soon as the transition had been made from a purely emotional to a conscious reaction, according to the intellectual content and symbolical value of the representation. The medieval interest in art was confined to the subject-matter, and it was not only in contemporary Christian art that the attention was concentrated on the meaning of the contents of the work, for even classical art was judged purely according to its spiritual content.¹¹⁴ The change in the Renaissance attitude to classical art and literature is to be ascribed not to the discovery of new works and new authors, but to the transference of interest from the material content to the formal elements of the representation, whether it was a question of newly discovered or already familiar monuments, made no difference.¹¹⁵ It is typical of the new attitude that the public now adopted the artistic approach of the artists themselves, and judged art not from the standpoint of life and religion but from that of art itself. Medieval art aimed at interpreting life and elevating man, Renaissance art at enriching life and delighting man. To the empirical and the transcendental sphere of life to which the medieval world was restricted, it added a new province, in which both the secular and metaphysical prototypes of existence acquired a new and hitherto undreamt-of meaning of their own.

The idea of an autonomous, non-utilitarian art, enjoyable in itself, was already familiar to the classical age; after being forgotten in the Middle Ages, it was simply rediscovered by the Renaissance. But it had never occurred to anyone before the Renaissance that a life devoted to the enjoyment of art might represent a higher and nobler form of existence. Plotinus and the Neoplatonists had ascribed a higher purpose to art, but had,

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at the same time, deprived it of its autonomy and made it a mere vehicle of intelligible knowledge. The idea of an art preserving the autonomy of its aesthetic nature and becoming an educational force despite its independence of the rest of the intellectual world, in fact merely as a result of its sovereign beauty, an idea already foreshadowed by Petrarch,¹¹⁶ is just as unmedieval as it is unclassical. The whole aestheticism of the Renaissance is unmedieval and unclassical, for even though the application to life itself of the standpoint and standards of art was not wholly foreign to classical antiquity, yet it would be impossible to find a parallel in any other age to the episode reported from the Renaissance of a believer refusing to kiss a crucifix handed to him on his death-bed because it was ugly and asking for a more beautiful one.¹¹⁷

The Renaissance conception of aesthetic autonomy is not a purist idea; the artist strives to emancipate himself from the fetters of scholastic thinking, but he is not particularly eager to stand on his own feet and it does not occur to him to make the independence of art a question of principle. On the contrary, he stresses the scientific nature of his intellectual activity. Not until the Cinquecento are the bonds uniting science and art into one homogeneous organ of knowledge loosened; not until then does the idea of the autonomy of art begin to imply that art is also independent of the world of science and learning. There are periods when art is turned in the direction of science, just as there are periods when science is turned in the direction of art. In the early Renaissance the truth of art is made dependent on scientific criteria, whilst in the later Renaissance and in the baroque scientific thinking is in many cases shaped in accordance with artistic principles. The perspective in painting of the Quattrocento is a scientific conception, whereas the *Universum* of Kepler and Galileo is a fundamentally aesthetic vision. Dilthey is right when he speaks of the 'artistic imagination' in the scientific research of the Renaissance,¹¹⁸ but one could speak with equal justification of the 'scientific imagination' in the artistic creation of the early Renaissance.

The prestige of the scholar and the scientist in the Quattrocento was not attained again until the nineteenth century. In

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both epochs all efforts were concentrated on promoting the expansion of industry and trade by new ways and means, by new scientific methods and technical inventions. This partly explains the primacy of science and the reputation of the scientist in both the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries. What Adolf Hildebrand and Bernard Berenson understand by 'form' in the plastic arts¹¹⁹ is, like Alberti's and Piero della Francesca's concept of perspective, more a theoretical than an aesthetic conception. Both categories are signposts in the world of sense experience, means towards the elucidation of spatial relationships, instruments of optical knowledge. The aesthetic philosophy of the nineteenth century can no more hide the theoretical character of its foundations than can the Renaissance the predominantly scientific nature of its interest in the external world. In the spatial values of Hildebrand, the geometrism of Cézanne, the physiological interests of the impressionists, the psychological interests of the whole of modern novel and drama, wherever we turn, we perceive a striving to find one's way about in the world of empirical reality, to explain the world as presented to us by nature, to multiply, to introduce order into and to work up into a rational system the data of sense experience. For the nineteenth century, art is an instrument of knowledge of the external world, a form of living experience, and of the analysis and interpretation of man. But this naturalism directed towards objective knowledge has its origin precisely in the fifteenth century; it was then that art underwent its first course of scientific training, and even today it is still living to some extent on the capital invested at that time. Mathematics and geometry, optics and mechanics, the theory of light and colour, anatomy and physiology were its tools, and the nature of space, the structure of the human body, movement and proportion, studies of drapery and experiments with colours were the problems with which it was concerned. That, for all its scholarliness, the fidelity to nature of the Quattrocento was merely a fiction is best seen from that means of expression, which may be regarded as the most concise epitome of Renaissance art: the central perspective used in the reproduction of space. Perspective was in itself no invention of the Renaissance.¹²⁰ Even classical antiquity was familiar with fore-

shortening and reduced the size of individual objects according to their distance from the spectator; but it was not acquainted with the representation of space based on uniform perspective and directed to one optical point, neither was it able or eager to represent the different objects and the space-intervals between them continuatively. The space in its pictorial representations was a compositum made up of disparate parts, not a uniform continuum—in the words of Panovsky, it was an 'aggregate space', not a 'systematic space'. Only since the Renaissance has painting been based on the assumption that the space in which things exist is an infinite, continuous and homogeneous element, and that we usually see things uniformly, that is to say, with a single and motionless eye.¹²¹ But what we actually perceive is a limited, discontinuous and heterogeneously compacted space. Our impression of space is distorted and blurred at the edges in reality, its content is divided into more or less independent groups and pieces, and, since our physiologically conditioned field of vision is spheroid, we see, to some extent, curves instead of straight lines. The picture of space based on planimetric perspective such as Renaissance art presents us with, characterized by the equal clarity and the consistent shaping of all parts, the common vanishing point of the parallels and the uniform module of distance measurement, the picture which L. B. Alberti defined as the transverse section of the optical pyramid, is a daring abstraction. Central perspective produces a mathematically accurate but psycho-physiologically impossible representation of space. This completely rationalized conception could appear to be the adequate reproduction of the actual optical impression only to such a thoroughly scientific period as the centuries between the Renaissance and the end of the nineteenth century. Uniformity and consistency were in fact the highest criteria of truth during the whole of this period. It is only in recent times that we have again become aware of the fact that we see reality not in the form of a consistently organized and unified space, but rather in scattered groups from different visual centres, and that, as our eye moves from one group to another, we add together the total panorama of a more extensive complex from partial views of the whole, just as Lorenzetti did in his great mural paintings in

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Siena. At any rate, the discontinuous representation of space in these frescoes makes a more convincing impression today than the pictures drawn according to the rules of central perspective by the masters of the Quattrocento.¹²²

The versatility of talent, and especially the union of art and science in one person, has been felt to be particularly characteristic of the Renaissance. But the fact that artists were masters of several different techniques, that Giotto, Orcagna, Brunelleschi, Benedetto da Majano, Leonardo da Vinci, were architects, sculptors and painters, Pisanello, Antonio Pollajuolo, Verrocchio, sculptors, painters, goldsmiths and medallists, that, in spite of advancing specialization, Raphael was still both a painter and an architect, and Michelangelo a sculptor, painter and architect at the same time, is connected more with the craft-like character of the visual arts than with the Renaissance ideal of versatility. Encyclopaedic learning and practical versatility are in fact medieval ideals; the Quattrocento takes them over along with the tradition of craftsmanship and abandons them to the same extent as it abandons the spirit of craftsmanship. In the later Renaissance we more and more seldom meet artists practising different kinds of art at the same time. But with the victory of the humanistic conception of culture, the idea of the *uomo universale*, an intellectual tendency opposed to specialization, comes to the fore again and leads to the cult of a type of versatility which is more akin to the *dilettante* than the craftsman. At the end of the Quattrocento both tendencies vie with each other. On the one side, the universalism of the humanistic ideal, suited to meet the requirements of the upper classes, reigns supreme. Under its influence the artist tries to supplement his manual skill with knowledge of an intellectual and cultural kind. On the other side, the principle of the division of labour and specialization is triumphant and gradually attains supreme power even in the field of art. Cardano already points out that to be occupied with several different things at the same time undermines the reputation of a cultured man. As opposed to the tendency to specialize, reference must be made above all to the remarkable fact that of the leading architects of the High Renaissance only Antonio da Sangallo had prepared himself for the career; Bramante was originally

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a painter, Raphael and Peruzzi continued to combine painting with architecture, and Michelangelo is and remains above all a sculptor. The fact that the architectural profession was taken up comparatively so late in life and that many of the masters received a predominantly theoretical training for it shows, on the one hand, how quickly practical education had been superseded by intellectual and academic education, and, on the other, how architecture becomes to some extent the pastime of an amateur. At all times the grand seigneur has in fact been fond of acting not merely as a patron but also as a dilettante architect.

Ghiberti needed several decades to complete the doors of the Baptistry and Luca della Robbia also spent nearly ten years on his Cantoria for the Cathedral in Florence. On the other hand, Ghirlandajo's method of working is already characterized by the *fa presto* technique of the genius, and Vasari sees a direct token of genuine artistic talent in ease and speed of production.¹²³ Both elements, dilettantism and virtuosity, contradictory as they are in themselves, are united in the humanist, who has been rightly described as the 'virtuoso of the intellectual life', but one might describe him equally well as the unspoilt and eternally youthful dilettante. Both elements are contained in the ideal of personality which the humanists are concerned to realize; but in their paradoxical union there is expressed the problematical nature of the intellectual life led by the humanists with its roots in the concept of the literary profession itself, of which they are the first representatives—the concept of a professional class which claims to be perfectly independent but is in fact tied in many ways. The Italian writers of the fourteenth century still came very largely from the higher classes of society; they were members of the urban aristocracy or the sons of well-to-do bourgeois. Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoja were of noble extraction, Petrarch was a notary's son, Brunetto Latini was himself a notary, Villani and Sacchetti were prosperous merchants, Boccaccio and Sercambi the sons of rich merchants. These writers had hardly anything in common with the medieval minstrels.¹²⁴ But the humanists belong neither to a class-determined, nor to a culturally and professionally uniform social category, they include clerics and laymen, rich and poor, high officials and minor notaries, merchants

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and schoolmasters, lawyers and scholars.¹²⁵ The representatives of the lower classes come, however, to form an ever-increasing proportion of their total numbers. The most famous, most influential of all of them is the son of a shoemaker. They are all town-born and bred—this is, at any rate, one characteristic which they share; many of them are the children of poor parents, some of them child prodigies, who, intended for a promising and highly attractive career, find themselves in unusual circumstances from the very start. Exaggerated ambitions aroused early in life, years of exacting study, often involving economic hardship, of struggle in tutorial and secretarial work, the search for position and fame, friendships with the great, jealousy-ridden animosities, cheap successes and undeserved failures, overwhelming honours and admiration, on the one hand, and vagabondage on the other—all these experiences could not fail to have an influence and inflict great moral injury on them. The social conditions of the age offered opportunities to a man of letters and threatened him with dangers which were apt to poison the spirit of a gifted young man from the outset.

The precondition of the rise of humanism as a, theoretically, free literary profession was the existence of a comparatively broad propertied class, able to provide a ready-made literary public. It is true that from the very beginning the most important centres of the humanist movement were the courts and state chancelleries, but most of its supporters were well-to-do merchants and other elements who had acquired money and influence through the rise of capitalism. The works of medieval literature were still intended only for a very limited circle, consisting usually of people already well known to the writers; the humanists are the first authors to address themselves to a broader and to some extent unknown public. Something in the nature of a free literary market and a public opinion conditioned and influenced by literature has only existed since their time. Their speeches and pamphlets are the first forms of modern journalism; their letters, which circulated amongst a relatively wide public, were the newspapers of their day.¹²⁶ Arentino is the 'first journalist' and, at the same time, the first blackmailing journalist. The freedom to which he owes his existence first became possible in an age in which the

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writer was no longer absolutely dependent on a single patron or a strictly limited circle of patrons, but had so many potential customers for his products that he no longer needed to be on good terms with all of them. But, after all, it was only a comparatively small educated class on whom the humanists could rely for their public, and, compared with the modern man of letters, they still led a parasitical life, unless they had private means and were, therefore, independent from the very start. They were usually dependent on the favour of the courts and the patronage of influential citizens, whom they normally served as secretaries or private tutors. They drew salaries from the state, pensions and benefices instead of the old board and lodging and donations—their rather costly maintenance was regarded by the new élite as one of the inevitable expenses in the upkeep of an elegant household. Instead of a court singer or fool, a private historian or professional panegyrist, the gentleman of private means now kept a humanist in the house, but the services he performed, though the forms it took were somewhat sublimated, were in fact very much the same. On the other hand, more was expected of him than the mere performance of these services. For, just as the upper bourgeoisie had formerly allied itself with the hereditary aristocracy, it now wanted to enter into relationship with the intellectual aristocracy. Through the first great alliance it acquired a share in the privileges of noble birth, through the second it was to become intellectually ennobled.

Labouring under the misapprehension that they were intellectually free, the humanists were bound to feel their dependence on the ruling class humiliating. Patronage, that age-old and unproblematical institution, which was one of the things a poet of the Middle Ages took for granted, became a problem and a danger for the humanists. The relationship of the intelligentsia to property and wealth assumed increasingly complicated forms. To begin with, the humanists shared the stoical view of the wandering scholars and mendicant friars and regarded wealth in itself as valueless. As long as they were merely students, teachers and literati, they did not feel themselves called upon to change this opinion, but when they came into closer touch with the propertied class, an insoluble conflict arose between their former

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views and their new way of life.¹²⁷ It did not occur at all to the Greek sophist, the Roman rhetor, or the medieval cleric to move outside his fundamentally contemplative position in life, which engaged him in nothing more practical than educational work, and to compete with the ruling classes. The humanists are the first intellectuals to claim the privileges of property and rank, and intellectual arrogance, likewise a hitherto unknown phenomenon, is the psychological weapon of self-defence with which they react against their lack of success. The humanists are first encouraged and promoted in their ambitious strivings by the upper classes but are nevertheless finally held down. From the very outset, there is mutual suspicion between the arrogant cultured class, fighting against all external ties, and the matter-of-fact, fundamentally unintellectual business class.¹²⁸ For just as the dangers of the Sophistic way of thinking had been felt acutely in the age of Plato, so now, too, the upper class is, for all its sympathy for the humanist movement, full of unconcealable suspicion against the humanists, who do in fact constitute a destructive element on account of their rootlessness.

The latent conflict between the intellectual and the economic upper class is nowhere openly engaged as yet, least of all by the artists, who, with their less developed social consciousness, react more slowly than their humanistic masters. But the problem, even if it is unadmitted and unexpressed, is present all the time and in all places, and the whole intelligentsia, both literary and artistic, is threatened by the danger of developing either into an uprooted, 'unbourgeois' and envious class of bohemians or into a conservative, passive, cringing class of academics. The humanists escape from this alternative into their ivory tower, and finally succumb to both the dangers which they had intended to avoid. They are followed in this by the whole modern aesthetic movement, which, like them, becomes uprooted and passive at the same time, serving the interests of conservatism without being able to adapt itself to the order which it supports. By independence the humanist understands the lack of ties; his social disinterestedness is really an alienation from society; and his escape from the present is irresponsibility. He abstains from all political activity, in order not to tie himself down, but by his passivity he

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only confirms the holders of power. This is the real 'trahison des clercs', the betrayal of intellectual values by the intelligentsia, not the politicization of the spirit, for which it has been blamed in recent times.¹²⁰ The humanist loses touch with reality, he becomes a romantic who calls his estrangement from the world aloofness, his social indifference intellectual freedom, his bohemian way of thinking moral sovereignty. 'The meaning of life for him is'—as an expert on the Renaissance has put it—'to write a choice prose style, to shape exquisite stanzas, to translate from Greek into Latin. . . . What is essential to his mind is not that the Gauls should have been conquered, but that commentaries have been written about their having been conquered . . . the beauty of the deed yields to the beauty of the style. . . .'¹²⁰ The artists of the Renaissance are by no means so alienated from their contemporaries as the humanists, but their intellectual existence is already undermined, and they no longer succeed in finding the adjustment which enabled them to adapt themselves to the structure of medieval society. They stand at the cross-roads between activism and aestheticism. Or have they already made their choice? At any rate, they have lost the connection between artistic forms and extra-artistic purposes, a simply and absolutely unproblematical reality taken for granted by the Middle Ages.

The humanists are, however, not merely non-political aesthetes, idle speechifiers and romantic escapists, but also enthusiastic world-reformers, fanatical pioneers of progress and, above all, tireless pedagogues, rejoicing in the future. The painters and sculptors of the Renaissance owe them not only their abstract aestheticism, but also the idea of the artist as an intellectual hero and the conception of art as the educator of humanity. They were the first to make art an ingredient of intellectual and moral culture.

4. THE CLASSICISM OF THE CINQUECENTO

When Raphael came to Florence in 1504, Lorenzo had been dead for over ten years, his successor had been banished and the Gonfaloniere Pietro Soderini had introduced a bourgeois regime in the Republic again. But the change in the direction of a

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courtly representative, strictly formal artistic style had already been prepared for, the guiding principles of the new conventional taste had been laid down and generally recognized—the whole development merely had to proceed along the same road, without any new stimulus from outside. Raphael had only to continue in the direction already traced out in the works of Perugino and Leonardo, and, as a creative artist, he could do nothing else but follow this intrinsically conservative tendency, conservative because tending towards a timeless and abstract canon of form, but nevertheless progressive in the stylistic situation of the time. Incidentally, there was also no lack of external stimuli to cause him to keep to the direction, even though the impetus no longer emanated from Florence. But outside Florence there were families with dynastic claims and courtly manners at the helm all over Italy, and a regular court was formed, above all, around the person of the Pope in Rome, in which the same social ideals prevailed as in the other courts where art and culture were used to contribute to the outward brilliance of life.

In disintegrated Italy, the Pontifical State had seized the reins of political power. The Popes felt that they were the heirs of the Caesars and they also partly succeeded in exploiting for their own power-political ends the fantastic expectations of a renewal of the old glory of the Roman Empire which were burgeoning in every corner of the land. It is true that their political endeavours remained unfulfilled, but Rome became the centre of Western civilization and attained an intellectual influence which became still deeper during the Counter Reformation and remained active until far into the baroque period. Since the return of the Popes from Avignon, the city had been not only a diplomatic meeting place, with ambassadors and *chargés d'affaires* from every corner of the Christian world, but also an important money market where what must have then seemed exorbitant sums flowed in and were spent. As a financial power the curia surpassed all the princes, tyrants, bankers and merchants of North Italy; it could afford a more sumptuous expenditure on culture than all of them and it took over the lead in the field of art hitherto held by Florence. When the Popes returned from France, Rome lay almost in ruins after the barbaric invasions and the destruction

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caused by the century-long feuds of the Roman patrician families. The Romans were poor, and even the ecclesiastical dignitaries were unable to amass sufficient wealth to finance a revival of art which would have allowed Rome to compete with Florence. During the Quattrocento the papal residence had no Roman artists at its disposal; the Popes were dependent on outside forces. They called the most famous masters of the age to Rome, including Masaccio, Gentile de Fabriano, Donatello, Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli, Melozzo da Forlì, Pinturicchio and Mantegna, but after carrying out their commissions, they all left the city, without leaving behind the slightest trace apart from their works. Even under Sixtus IV (1471–84), who, by the commissions he gave for the decoration of his chapel, made Rome a centre of artistic production for a time, no school or tendency came into existence with a local Roman character. Such a tendency is not discernible until the papacy of Julius II (1503–13), after Bramante, Michelangelo and, finally, Raphael had settled in Rome and placed their gifts at the service of the Pope. That is the earliest beginning of that unique period of artistic activity of which the result is the monumental Rome, which we now see before us, not only as the greatest but also as the sole authoritative memorial of the High Renaissance, and which could have arisen at that time only under the conditions prevailing in the papal residence.

As opposed to the predominantly secular-minded art of the Quattrocento, we are now confronted with the beginnings of a new ecclesiastical art, in which, however, the emphasis is laid not on spiritual and supramundane values, but on solemnity, majesty, might and glory. The inwardness and other-worldliness of Christian feeling yields to an aloof coldness and the expression of physical as well as intellectual superiority. With every church, chapel, altar-piece and baptismal font, the Popes' chief intention seems to have been to immortalize themselves, thinking more of their own glory than of the glory of God. Court life in Rome reaches its zenith under Leo X (1513–21). The papal curia is like the court of an emperor; the cardinals' houses are reminiscent of small secular courts, and those of the other spiritual gentlemen of aristocratic households which try to outbid each other in splendour. Most of these princes and dignitaries of the Church

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are interested in art from the outset; they employ artists to immortalize their names either by the endowment of ecclesiastical art, or by the erection and embellishment of their palaces. The rich bankers of the city, with Agostino Chigi, the friend and patron of Raphael, at their head, try to vie with them as patrons of the arts; they increase the importance of Rome as an art market, but add no new note of their own to it.

In contrast to the, generally speaking, uniform ruling class in the other Italian cities, above all in Florence, the upper class in Rome is made up of three sharply defined groups.¹³¹ The most important consists of the papal household, with the Pope's relations, the higher ranks of the clergy, the Italian and foreign diplomats and the other innumerable personalities who have a share in the pontifical splendours. The members of this group are, on the whole, the most ambitious and moneyed supporters of art. A second group includes the great bankers and rich merchants, for whom economic conditions were the most propitious imaginable in the extravagant Rome of the time, now the centre of the world-embracing financial administration of the papacy. The banker Altoviti is one of the most generous supporters of art of the whole period, and, with the exception of Michelangelo, Raphael's enemy, all the most famous artists of the time work for Agostino Chigi; apart from Raphael, he employs Sodoma, Baldassare Peruzzi, Sebastiano del Piombo, Giulio Romano, Francesco Penni, Giovanni da Udine, as well as many other masters. The third group consists of the members of the old and already impoverished Roman families, who take almost no part in artistic life, and who only keep their names in the public eye at all by marrying their sons and daughters to the children of rich citizens, thereby bringing about a similar, though less comprehensive fusion of the classes, as had already taken place, in earlier times, in Florence and other cities, as a result of the participation of the old nobility in the business activities of the middle class.

At the beginning of the reign of Julius II it is possible to identify eight to ten painters resident in Rome, but only twenty-five years later as many as a hundred and twenty-four painters belonged to the Fraternity of St. Luke, of whom most were ordinary craftsmen, however, who, attracted by the require-

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ments of the papal court and the rich bourgeoisie, flocked to Rome from all parts of Italy.¹³² Now, however great the share which the prelates and bankers take in the production of art, in their capacity as employers, it is extremely characteristic of the art of the High Renaissance that Michelangelo worked almost exclusively, and Raphael also for the most part, for the Vatican. That fact is of decisive importance in the development of the style of this period. Only here, in the service of the Pope, could that *maniera grande* be developed compared with which the artistic trends of the other local schools are all more or less provincial in character. Nowhere else do we find this lofty, exclusive style, which is so deeply impregnated with the elements of culture and learning and so completely restricted to the solution of sublimated formal problems. The art of the early Renaissance could still at least be misunderstood by the broad masses; even the poor and the uneducated could find some points of contact with it, although these were on the periphery of its real aesthetic influence; but the masses have no contact at all with the new art. What possible meaning could Raphael's 'School of Athens' and Michelangelo's Sybils have had for them, even if they had ever been able to see these works?

But it was precisely in such works that the classical art of the Renaissance was realized, this art that we are in the habit of praising for the universality of its appeal, and yet, in reality, it was addressed to a smaller public than any preceding it. At any rate, its public influence was more limited than that of Greek classicism, with which it did, however, have this in common, that, despite its tendency to stylization, it implied not merely no surrender, but, on the contrary, an intensification and consummation, of the naturalistic achievements of the previous period. Just as the statues of the Parthenon are shaped 'more correctly', more in accordance with normal experience, than the tympana of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia, for example, so the individual objects in the works of Raphael and Michelangelo are treated more naturally, more freely, more as a matter of course, than in those of the masters of the Quattrocento. In the whole of Italian painting before Leonardo there is no human figure which, compared with the figures of Raphael, Fra Bartolommeo, Andrea

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del Sarto, Titian and Michelangelo, has not something clumsy, stiff, constricted about it. However rich they are in accurately observed details, the figures of the early Renaissance never stand quite firmly and securely on their feet, their movements are always somewhat cramped and forced, their limbs creak and wobble at the joints, their relationship to the space around them is often contradictory, the way they are modelled is obtrusive and the way they are illuminated artificial. The naturalistic efforts of the fifteenth century do not come to fruition until the sixteenth. The stylistic unity of the Renaissance is expressed, however, not merely in the fact that the naturalism of the fifteenth century is continued and consummated in the Cinquecento, but also in the fact that the process of stylization which leads to the classical art of the High Renaissance begins in the middle of the Quattrocento. One of the most important concepts of classicism, the definition of beauty as the harmony of all the parts, is already formulated by Alberti. He thinks that the work of art is so constituted that it is impossible to take anything away from it or to add anything to it, without impairing the beauty of the whole.¹³³ This idea, which Alberti had found in Vitruvius and which really has its source in Aristotle,¹³⁴ remains one of the fundamental propositions of the classical theory of art. But how can this comparative uniformity in the art philosophy of the Renaissance—with the beginnings of classicism in the Quattrocento and the continuance of naturalism in the Cinquecento—be reconciled with the social changes in the same period? The High Renaissance preserves the sense of fidelity to nature, maintains and even tightens up the empirical criteria of artistic truth, obviously because, like the classical period of the Greeks, it represents, for all its conservatism, a still fundamentally dynamic age, in which the process of rising in the social scale is not yet complete, and in which it is still impossible for any definite and final conventions and traditions to develop. Yet the attempt to bring the levelling process to an end and to prevent any further rises up the social ladder had been in full swing since the arrival of the middle class and its intermingling with the nobility; the beginnings of the classicistic conception of art in the Quattrocento are in accordance with this tendency.

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The fact that the change from naturalism to classicism does not take place abruptly, but is prepared so long beforehand, can easily lead to a misunderstanding of the whole process of the stylistic transformation which now takes place. For, if one concentrates one's attention on the portents of the coming change and proceeds from transitional phenomena such as the art of Leonardo and Perugino, one will get the impression that the change goes on without a single break and with an almost logical inevitability, and that the art of the High Renaissance is nothing but the mere synthesis of the achievements of the Quattrocento. In a word, one will be easily persuaded to conclude that the development of the styles was endogamous. The change from classical to Christian art, or from Romanesque to Gothic, introduces so much that is fundamentally new that the more recent style can hardly be explained in terms of immanence, that is to say, as the mere dialectical antithesis or synthesis of the older style, and requires an explanation based on other than purely artistic and stylistic motives. In the case of the transition from the Quattrocento to the Cinquecento the situation is different, however. Here the change of style takes place almost without a break, in exact accordance with the social development, which is itself continuous. But it does not, therefore, take place automatically, that is, as a logical function with completely known coefficients. If social conditions, at the end of the fifteenth century, had developed differently, owing to some circumstance difficult for us to imagine—if, for example, a fundamental economic, political, or religious change had occurred instead of the consolidation of the conservative tendency for which the way had already been prepared—then, in accordance with such a change, art too would have developed in a different direction, and the resulting style would have represented a different 'logical' consequence of the early Renaissance from that consummated in the classical style. For, if one is going to apply the principle of logic to historical developments at all, one should at least admit that a set of historical circumstances may have several divergent results.

Raphael's Arazzi have been called the Parthenon sculptures of modern art; the analogy may be allowed to stand, provided one does not forget the vast difference between ancient and modern

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classicism, despite all their similarity. Compared with Greek art, modern classical art is lacking in warmth and immediacy; it has a derived, retrospective and, even in the Renaissance, a more or less classicistic character. It is the reflection of a society which, filled with reminiscences of Roman heroism and medieval chivalry, tries to appear to be something which it is not, by following an artificially produced social and moral code, and which stylizes the whole pattern of its life in accordance with this fictitious scheme. Classical art describes this society as it wants to see itself and as it wants to be seen. There is hardly a feature in this art which would not, on closer examination, prove to be anything more than the translation into artistic terms of the aristocratic, conservative ideals cherished by this society striving for permanence and continuity. The whole artistic formalism of the Cinquecento merely corresponds to the formalized system of moral conceptions and decorum which the upper class of the period imposes on itself. Just as the aristocracy and the aristocratically-minded circles of society subject life to the rule of a formal code, in order to preserve it from the anarchy of the emotions, so they also submit the expression of the emotions in art to the censorship of definite, abstract and impersonal forms. For this society, self-control, the suppression of the passions, the subduing of spontaneity, of inspiration and ecstasy, are the highest commandment. The display of the feelings, the tears and grimaces of pain, swooning, wailing and wringing of the hands, in brief, all that bourgeois emotionalism of which some remains from the late Gothic survived in the Quattrocento, disappears from the art of the High Renaissance. Christ is no longer a suffering martyr, but once again the heavenly King above all human weakness. Mary looks at her dead son with no tears, no gestures; indeed she suppresses any kind of plebeian gentleness even towards the Christ child. Moderation in all things is the watchword of the age. The rules of discipline and order in the conduct of daily life find their closest analogy in the principles of economy and conciseness which art imposes upon itself. L. B. Alberti had already anticipated this idea of artistic economy. 'Whoever strives after dignity in his work', he thinks, 'will limit himself to a small number of figures; for just as princes enhance their majesty by the shortness

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of their speeches, so a sparing use of figures increases the value of a work of art'.¹³⁵ Mere co-ordination of the formal composition is now replaced everywhere by the principle of concentration and subordination. But one must not imagine the functioning of social causality to be such that the authority which holds sway over the individual in social life becomes, in the field of art, the rule of the total plan governing all the separate parts of a composition, and that, therefore, the democracy of the elements of art is now transformed, as it were, into the sovereignty of the basic idea of the composition. The simple equation of the principle of authority in social life and the idea of subordination in art would be a mere equivocation. But a society based on the idea of authority and submission will, naturally, favour the expression and manifestation of discipline and order in art, and the conquest of rather than the surrender to reality.

Such a society will want to invest the work of art with regularity and necessity. It will want art to prove that there are universally valid, unshakable, inviolable standards and principles, that the world is ruled by an absolute and immutable purpose, and that man—though not every individual man—is the custodian of this purpose. Art forms will have to be authoritative to agree with the ideas of this society, and must make a definitive and consummate impression comparable to that which the authoritarian order of the age desires to make. The ruling class will look to art, above all, as the symbol of the calm and stability which it aspires to attain in life. For, if the High Renaissance develops artistic composition in the form of the symmetry and correspondence of the separate parts, and forces reality into the pattern of a triangle or circle, then that does not imply merely the solution of a formal problem, but also the expression of a stable outlook on life and of the desire to perpetuate the state of affairs which corresponds to this outlook. It places the norm above personal freedom in art and considers the pursuit of the norm here, as in life itself, to be the most certain way to perfection. The main ingredient in this perfection is the totality of outlook, which is attained only by the complete integration of the parts in a whole, never by the mere process of addition. The Quattrocento represented the world as in a state of never-ending flux, as an

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uncontrollable, never completable process of growth; the individual person felt himself small and powerless in this world and surrendered himself to it willingly and thankfully. The Cinquecento experiences the world as a totality with definite boundaries; the world is as much as, but no more than man can grasp; and every perfect work of art expresses in its own way the whole of the reality that man can comprehend.

The art of the High Renaissance is absolutely secular in its outlook; even in the representations of religious subjects, it attains its ideal style not by contrasting natural with supernatural reality, but by creating a distance between the objects of natural reality itself—a distance which in the world of visual experience creates differences of value similar to those that exist between the élite and the masses in human society. Its harmony is the utopian ideal of a world from which all conflict is excluded, and moreover, not as a result of the rule of a democratic but of an autocratic principle. Its creations represent an enhanced, ennobled reality exempt from transitoriness and banality. Its most important stylistic principle is the restriction of the representation to the bare essentials. But what are these 'essentials'? They are the lasting, unchanging incorruptible things whose value lies, above all, in their remoteness from mere actuality and chance. On the other hand, the concrete and the direct, the accidental and the individual, in a word, those things which the art of the Quattrocento considered the most interesting and substantial elements in reality, are regarded by this art as inessentials. The élite of the High Renaissance creates the fiction of a timelessly valid, 'eternally human' art, because it wants to think of its own influence and position as timeless, imperishable and immutable. In reality, of course, its art is just as time-conditioned, just as limited and transitory, with its own standards of value and criteria of beauty, as the art of any other period. For even the idea of timelessness is the product of a particular time, and the validity of absolutism just as relative as that of relativism.

The most time-bound and most strictly sociological of all the factors of High Renaissance art is the ideal of *kalokagathia*. The dependence of its concept of beauty on the aristocratic ideal of personality is nowhere so strikingly expressed as in this element.

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It is not the fact that physical beauty comes into its own in the Cinquecento that is new and a special mark of its aristocratic outlook—in contrast to the spiritualism of the Middle Ages, the fifteenth century had already had a loving eye for the attractions of the body—but what is new is that physical beauty and power become the valid expression of intellectual beauty and significance. The Middle Ages felt there was an irreconcilable conflict between the life of the unsensual spirit and the unspiritual body; the conflict was stressed more at some times than at others, but it was always present somewhere in men's thoughts. The medieval incompatibility of the spiritual and the physical loses its significance in the age of the Quattrocento; spiritual and intellectual significance is still not bound up unconditionally with physical beauty, but the two are no longer mutually exclusive. The tension which still exists here between spiritual and physical qualities disappears completely in the art of the High Renaissance. According to the presuppositions of this art, it would seem inconceivable, for example, that the apostles should be represented as ordinary peasants and commonplace artisans, as they were so often and with such relish in the fifteenth century. For this new art, the prophets, apostles, martyrs and saints are ideal personalities, free and great, powerful and dignified, grave and solemn—a heroic race in the full bloom of ripe, sensuous beauty. In Leonardo's work we still find everyday types alongside of these noble figures, but gradually nothing comes to appear worthy of artistic representation that is not grand and sublime. The water-carrier in the Raphaelesque 'Fire in the Borgo' belongs to the same race as Michelangelo's Madonnas and Sybils—a race gigantic, energetically active, self-confident and assured in all its movements. The grandeur of these figures is so overwhelming that, in spite of the old dislike of the aristocratic classes for the representation of the nude, they are allowed to appear unclothed; they thereby lose nothing of their sublimity. In the noble formation of their limbs, in the elegant harmony of their gestures, in the grave dignity of their bearing the same distinction is expressed as in the costumes that they otherwise wear, which are heavy, with deep folds, rustling as they move, and always tastefully reticent and fastidiously choice.

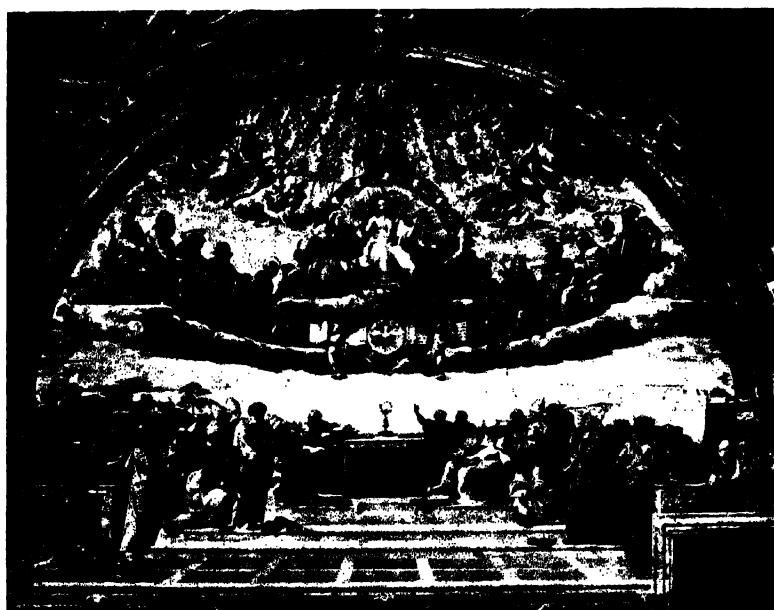
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The ideal of personality which Castiglione represents in his 'Cortegiano' as thoroughly attainable, as having, in fact, already been attained, is taken as the model here and only heightened by that extra degree which every classical art adds to the size of its model. The courtly ideal contains, in essentials, all the predominant features of the High Renaissance representation of man in art. What Castiglione demands of the perfect man of the world is, first of all, versatility, the uniform development of physical and spiritual capacities, skill both in the use of weapons and in the art of refined social intercourse, experience in the arts of poetry and music, familiarity with painting and the sciences. It is obvious that the determining factor in Castiglione's thought is the aristocratic aversion from every kind of specialization and professional activity. In their *kalokagathia*, the heroic figures of High Renaissance art are nothing more than the translation of this human and social ideal into visual terms. But it is not merely the lack of tension between their spiritual and physical qualities, not merely the equation of physical beauty and spiritual power, that corresponds to the courtly ideal, but, above all, the freedom with which they move, the relaxed carriage and the calm, in fact the care-free, nature of their whole bearing. For Castiglione, the quintessence of refinement is that one should preserve one's composure and self-control under all circumstances, avoid all ostentation and exaggeration, give an impression of unconstraint, not strike an attitude, and behave in company with an unaffected nonchalance and effortless dignity. Now, in the figures of Cinquecento art we rediscover not only this composure of the gestures, this calmness of bearing, this freedom of movement, but the change-over from the previous period also extends to the purely formal elements: the slender, bloodless, Gothic form and the broken, short-winded line of the Quattrocento gain an assured flow, a rhetorical verve, an elegant roundness more perfectly than in any art since the age of classical antiquity. The artists of the High Renaissance no longer find any pleasure in the short, angular, hasty movements, the sprawling and ostentatious elegance, the austere, youthful, unripe beauty of the Quattrocento figures. They extol the abundance of power, the ripeness of age and beauty; they portray life as being, not as a process of

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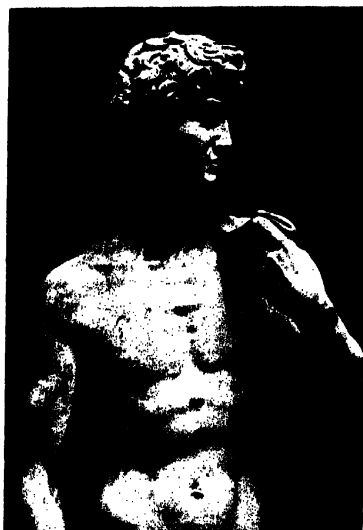
becoming; they work for a society of people who have arrived, and want to remain where they are, and, like them, their feelings are conservative. Castiglione desires that the nobleman should strive to avoid the conspicuous, the loud and the motley both in his behaviour and in his dress, and recommends him to wear, like the Spaniards, black or, at any rate, dark clothes.¹³⁶ The change of taste which is manifest here goes so deep that even in art the colourfulness and brightness of the Quattrocento are avoided. That is the first victory of that fondness for the monochrome, especially black and white, which dominates modern taste. The colours disappear, first of all, from architecture and sculpture, and, from now on, people obviously find it difficult to imagine the works of Greek architecture and sculpture as coloured. The classical age already bears within itself the essence of the classicistic style.¹³⁷

The High Renaissance was of short duration; it covered no more than twenty years. After the death of Raphael it is hardly possible to speak of classical art as representative of a general stylistic trend. The shortness of its life is typical of the fate of all the periods of classical style in modern times; since the end of feudalism the epochs of stability have been nothing but short episodes. The rigorous formalism of the High Renaissance has certainly remained a constant temptation for later generations, but apart from short, mostly sophisticated and educationally inspired movements, it has never prevailed again. On the other hand, it has proved to be the most important undercurrent in modern art; for even though the strictly formalistic style, based on the typical and the normative, was unable to hold its own against the fundamental naturalism of the modern age, nevertheless, after the Renaissance, a return to the incoherent, cumulative, co-ordinating formal methods of the Middle Ages was no longer possible. Since the Renaissance, we think of a work of painting or sculpture as a concentrated picture of reality, seen from a single and uniform point of view—a formal structure that arises from the tension between the wide world and the undivided subject opposed to the world. This polarity between art and the world was mitigated from time to time, but never again abolished. It represents the real inheritance of the Renaissance.



1. LEONARDO: THE LAST SUPPER. *Fresco in the Refectory of the Monastery of Sta. Maria delle Grazie in Milan. 1495-98.* The first perfect example of that strict form, confined to the essential and the necessary, which represents the artistic analogy to the aristocratic ideal of self-control.

2. RAPHAEL: THE DISPUTA. *Fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura, Rome, Vatican. 1509-11.* Here the principle of normativity holds unlimited sway, and even those elements of spontaneity and directness are lacking which are still present in Leonardo.



1. MICHELANGELO: DAVID. (Detail). Florence, Accademia di Belle Arti, 1501-4.—Just as an increasingly less heroic treatment of the male figure is to be observed in the course of development from Polykleitos to Lysippos, the opposite tendency can be seen in the development leading from Donatello to Michelangelo: the ideal of human personality becomes increasingly less bourgeois and approaches the ideal of aristocratic *kalokagathia*.



2. TITIAN: EMPEROR CHARLES V ON HORSEBACK. Madrid, Prado, 1548. Here the grand heroic form already assumes the characteristics of a ceremonial style which one can hardly imagine in connection with Michelangelo.

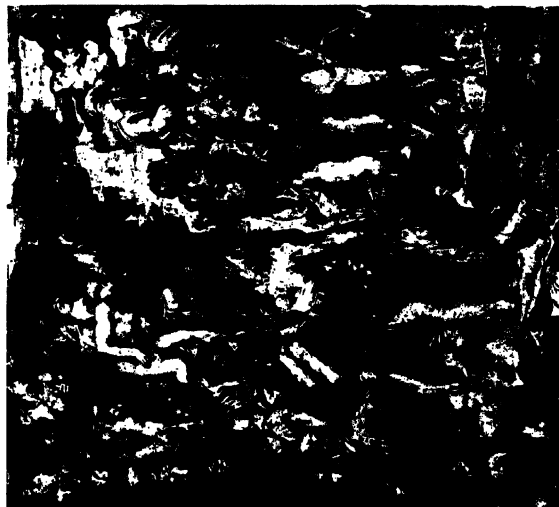


3. TITIAN: SHEPHERD AND NYMPH. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, about 1570. In spite of the tasks which accrue to him in the service of his highly placed clientèle, Titian is and remains the most spontaneous, most sensuous, the most 'painterly' painter of the Renaissance — an artist for whom cool, courtly mannerism has no charms.

1. MICHELANGELO: THE LAST JUDGEMENT (Detail), Rome, Sixtine Chapel, 1534-41. : With Michelangelo, the main representative of the Renaissance, the dissolution of the classical feeling for harmony already begins. His "Last Judgement" is no longer a monument of beauty, power and youth, but a picture of bewilderment and despair.

2. MICHELANGELO: THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL, Cappella Paolina, Rome, Vatican, 1542-49. The frescoes of the Cappella Paolina mark the next phase in Michelangelo's development. The unreal and irrational character of his pictorial vision is intensified.

3. MICHELANGELO: PIETÀ RONDANINI, Rome, Palazzo Rondanini, 1556-64. : The body has lost its autonomy. The work can hardly any longer be called an artistic structure: it is an ecstatic confession, formless, unorganized, unarticulated.





1. PONTORMO: JOSEPH IN EGYPT. *London, National Gallery, 1518-19.* We are here confronted with a disintegration of space similar to that in the last works of Michelangelo. Real figures move in an unreal, arbitrarily constructed framework.

2. BRONZINO: ELEONORA OF TOLEDO WITH HER SON. *Florence, Uffizi. About 1555.*—Bronzino is, above all as a portraitist, one of the founders of courtly mannerism.

3. PARMIGIANINO: MADONNA DEL COLLO LUNGO. *Florence, Palazzo Pitti. Begun in 1532, left incomplete.* The heterogeneity of the pictorial elements becomes a highly skilled game, a secretive mannerism, the understanding of which is confined to an extremely narrow circle.

TEXTURE FOR THE LAST SUPPER. *Univ. of N. Giorgio, Maggiore, 1592-94.* It is sufficient to compare one of Tintoretto's representations of the Last Supper with Leonardo's treatment of the same subject to notice the complete dissolution of the Renaissance by mannerism, the absolute dynamization and dramatization of the optical experience.





1. TINTORETTO: MOSES BRINGING FORTH WATER FROM THE ROCK. *Venice, Scuola di San Rocco, 1577.* *The representations of biblical stories take on a visionary and phantastic character in Tintoretto. They often represent cosmic happenings, primordial dramas in which God himself becomes a heavenly body in motion.*

2. TINTORETTO: ST. MARY AEGYPTIACA. *Venice, Scuola di San Rocco, 1583-87.* *Here the scenery of the biblical motif is transformed into a mythological landscape in which the human figure almost disappears and the background dominates the stage.*

1. GRECO: THE BURIAL OF THE COUNT OF ORGAZ. Toledo, San Tomé. 1586.—*The work represents a ceremonial scene in the correct courtly taste, but it is, at the same time, the representation of a spiritual drama of the deepest, tenderest and most mysterious nature.*



2. GRECO: THE VISITATION. Washington, Dunbarton Oaks Collection. 1604-14.—*Greco is the artist who, in his last works, comes nearest to the dematerialization of reality achieved by Michelangelo. The 'Visitation' and the 'Wedding of Mary' take the place of the 'Pietà Rondanini' in his development. The figures are dissolved in the light and become airy, ethereal shadows in an abstract, unreal, indefinable space.*



1. BRUEGEL: AUTUMN. *Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. 1565.*— In outlook on the world reminiscent of Tintoretto's cosmic conception predominates in Bruegel's landscapes.

2. BRUEGEL: A COUNTRY WEDDING. *Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. About 1565.*— This work, with its dynamic treatment of space, is also reminiscent of Tintoretto, in whose representations of the Last Supper a similar disposition is to be found.

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5. THE CONCEPT OF MANNERISM

Mannerism came so late into the foreground of research on the history of art, that the depreciatory verdict implied in its very name is often still taken to be adequate, and the unprejudiced conception of this style as a purely historical category has been made very difficult. In the case of other names given to historical styles, such as Gothic and Renaissance, baroque and classicism, the original—positive or negative—valuation has already become completely obliterated, but in the case of mannerism, on the other hand, the negative attitude is still so strongly active that one has to fight against a certain inner resistance, before one can summon up the courage to call the great artists and writers of this period 'manneristic'. Not until the concept of the manneristic is completely separated from that of the mannered, do we get a category that can be used in the historical investigation of these phenomena. The purely descriptive concept of the species and the qualitative concept, which have to be distinguished from each other here, coincide over certain stretches, but intrinsically they have almost nothing in common.

The conception of post-classical art as a process of decline, and of the manneristic practice of art as a rigid routine slavishly imitating the great masters, is derived from the seventeenth century and was first developed by Bellori in his biography of Annibale Carracci.¹³⁸ Vasari still uses *maniera* to mean artistic individuality, a historically, personally or technically conditioned mode of expression, hence 'style' in the widest sense of the word. He speaks of a *gran' maniera*, and means something thoroughly positive. The term *maniera* has a wholly positive meaning in Borghini, who even regrets the lack of this quality in certain artists,¹³⁹ and thereby anticipates the modern distinction between style and lack of style. The classicists of the seventeenth century—Bellori and Malvasia—are the first to connect with the concept of the *maniera* the idea of an affected, hackneyed style of art, reducible to a series of formulae; they are the first to be aware of the breach that mannerism introduces into the development of art, and the first to be conscious of the estrangement from classicism which makes itself felt in art after 1520.

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But why does this estrangement really take place so early? Why does the High Renaissance remain a 'narrow ridge'—as Woelfflin says—which is crossed the moment it is reached? A ridge which is even still narrower than Woelfflin would lead one to think. For not only the works of Michelangelo, but even those of Raphael already contain within them the seeds of dissolution. The 'Expulsion of Heliodorus' and the 'Transfiguration' are full of anti-classical tendencies bursting through the framework of the Renaissance in more than one direction. What is the explanation of the shortness of the time in which classical, conservative and rigorously formal principles hold undisturbed sway? Why does classicism, which in antiquity was a style based on composure and permanence, now appear as a 'transitory stage'? Why does it degenerate so quickly this time into a purely external imitation of classical models, on the one hand, and a spiritual aloofness from them, on the other?—Perhaps, because the balance that found its artistic expression in the classicism of the Cinquecento was more an ideal and a fiction than a reality from the very outset, and because the Renaissance remained, as we know, to the very last an essentially dynamic age, which was unable to find complete satisfaction in any one solution of its problems. The attempt which it made to master the shifting nature of the capitalistic mind and the dialectical nature of the scientific outlook was, at any rate, no more successful than the similar attempts made in later periods of modern cultural development. A state of constant social composure has never been reached again since the Middle Ages; therefore, above all, the classicistic movements of modern times are more the result of a programme and the reflection of a hope than the expression of a state of calm assurance. Even the precarious balance which arose around the turn of the Quattrocento, as the creation of the sated, courtier-aping upper middle class and of the capitalistically strong and politically ambitious curia, was of short duration. After the loss of Italy's economic supremacy, the deep shock sustained by the Church in the Reformation, the invasion of the country by the French and the Spaniards and the Sack of Rome, even the fiction of a well-balanced and stable state of affairs can no longer be maintained. The predominant mood in Italy is one of impending doom, and

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it soon spreads to the whole of Western Europe, though not merely from Italy as its point of origin.

The tension-free formulae of balance propounded by classical art are no longer adequate; and yet they are still adhered to—sometimes even more faithfully, more anxiously, more desperately than would be the case in a relationship which is taken for granted. The attitude of the young artists to the High Renaissance is remarkably complicated; they cannot simply renounce the artistic achievements of classicism, even though the harmonious philosophy of this art has become completely foreign to them. Their desire to maintain the unbroken continuity of the artistic process, however, could hardly have been fulfilled unless the continuity of social development had supported such efforts. For, in essentials, the artists, as a collective body, and the public are constituted as they were in the age of the Renaissance, although the ground beneath their feet is already beginning to quake. The feeling of insecurity explains the ambivalent nature of their relation to classical art. The art critics of the seventeenth century had already felt this ambivalence, but they did not see that the simultaneous imitation and distortion of classical models was conditioned not by a lack of intelligence, but by the new and utterly unclassical spirit of the mannerists.

It was left to our own age, which stands in just as problematical relationship to its ancestors as mannerism did to classical art, to understand the creative nature of this style and to recognize in the often anxious imitation of classical models an over-compensation for the spiritual distance by which it was separated from them. We are the first to grasp the fact that the stylistic efforts of all the leading artists of mannerism, of Pontormo and Parmigianino as of Bronzino and Beccafumi, of Tintoretto and Greco as of Bruegel and Spranger, were concentrated, above all, on breaking up the all too obvious regularity and harmony of classical art and replacing its superpersonal normativity by more subjective and more suggestive features. At one time, it is the deepening and spiritualizing of religious experience and the vision of a new spiritual content in life; at another, an exaggerated intellectualism, consciously and deliberately deforming reality, with a tinge of the bizarre and the abstruse; sometimes, however,

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it is a fastidious and affected epicureanism, translating everything into subtlety and elegance, which leads to the abandonment of classical forms. But the artistic solution is always a derivative, a structure dependent in the final analysis on classicism, and originating in a cultural, not a natural experience, whether it is expressed in the form of a protest against classical art or seeks to preserve the formal achievements of this art. We are dealing here, in other words, with a completely self-conscious style,¹⁴⁰ which bases its forms not so much on the particular object as on the art of the preceding epoch, and to a greater extent than was the case with any previous significant trend of art. The conscious attention of the artist is directed no longer merely to choosing the means best adapted to his artistic purpose, but also to defining the artistic purpose itself—the theoretical programme is no longer concerned merely with methods, but also with aims. From this point of view, mannerism is the first modern style, the first concerned with a cultural problem and which regards the relationship between tradition and innovation as a problem to be solved by rational means. Tradition is here nothing but a bulwark against the all too violently approaching storms of the unfamiliar, an element which is felt to be a principle of life but also of destruction. It is impossible to understand mannerism if one does not grasp the fact that its imitation of classical models is an escape from the threatening chaos, and that the subjective over-straining of its forms is the expression of the fear that form might fail in the struggle with life and art fade into soulless beauty.

The topical interest of mannerism for us, the revision to which the art of Tintoretto, Greco, Bruegel and the late Michelangelo has recently been subjected, is just as symptomatic of the intellectual climate of our day as the revaluation of the Renaissance was for Burckhardt's generation and the vindication of the baroque for that of Riegl and Woelfflin. Burckhardt considered Parmigianino affected and repulsive, and Woelfflin still saw in mannerism something in the nature of a disturbance of the natural, healthy development of art—a superfluous *intermezzo* between the Renaissance and the baroque. Only an age which had experienced the tension between form and content, between beauty and expression, as its own vital problem, could do justice

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to mannerism, and work out the true nature of its individuality, in contrast to both the Renaissance and the baroque. Woelfflin still lacked the genuine and direct experience of post-impressionist art—the experience which enabled Dvořák to assess the importance of the spiritualistic trends in the history of art, and to see in mannerism the victory of such a trend. Dvořák knew quite well that spiritualism does not exhaust the meaning of manneristic art and that it does not represent, as does the transcendentalism of the Middle Ages, a complete renunciation of the world; he did not overlook the fact that beside a Greco there was also a Bruegel and beside a Tasso a Shakespeare and Cervantes.¹⁴¹ The main problem to concern him seems to have been precisely the mutual relationship, the common denominator and the principle of differentiation between the various—spiritualistic and naturalistic—phenomena within mannerism. The analyses of this scholar, who died far too early, unfortunately do not go far beyond the statement of these two, as he called them, ‘deductive and inductive’ tendencies, and they make the fact that his life was cut short so early seem all the more regrettable.

The two opposed currents in mannerism—the mystical spiritualism of Greco and the pantheistic naturalism of Bruegel—do not, however, always confront each other as separate stylistic tendencies personified in different artists, but are in fact usually indissolubly intertwined. Pontormo and Rosso, Tintoretto and Parmigianino, Mor and Bruegel, Heemskerck and Callot, are just as decided realists as they are idealists, and the complex and hardly to be differentiated unity of naturalism and spiritualism, formlessness and formalism, concreteness and abstraction, in their art is the basic formula of the whole style which they share. But this heterogeneity of tendencies does not imply a mere subjectivism and a pure arbitrariness in the choice of the degree of reality to be attained in the work of art, as even Dvořák thought,¹⁴² but is rather a sign of the shattering of all the criteria of reality and the result of the often desperate attempt to bring the spirituality of the Middle Ages into harmony with the realism of the Renaissance.

Nothing characterizes the disturbance of the classical harmony better than the disintegration of that unity of space which was

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the most pregnant expression of the Renaissance conception of art. The uniformity of scene, the topographical coherence of the composition, the consistent logic of the spatial structure, were for the Renaissance amongst the most important preconditions of the artistic effect of a picture. The whole system of perspective drawing, all the rules of proportion and tectonics, were merely means serving the ultimate end of spatial logic and unity. Mannerism begins by breaking up the Renaissance structure of space and the scene to be represented into separate, not merely externally separate but also inwardly differently organized, parts. It allows different spatial values, different standards, different possibilities of movement to predominate in the different sections of the picture: in one the principle of economy, and in another that of extravagance in the treatment of space. This breaking up of the spatial unity of the picture is expressed most strikingly in the fact that there is no relationship capable of logical formulation between the size and the thematic importance of the figures. Motifs which seem to be of only secondary significance for the real subject of the picture are often overbearingly prominent, whereas what is apparently the leading theme is devalued and suppressed. It is as though the artist were trying to say: It is by no means settled who are the principal actors and who are the mere walkers-on in my play!—The final effect is of real figures moving in an unreal, arbitrarily constructed space, the combination of real details in an imaginary framework, the free manipulation of the spatial coefficients purely according to the purpose of the moment. The nearest analogy to this world of mingled reality is the dream, in which real connections are abolished and things are brought into an abstract relationship to one another, but in which the individual objects themselves are described with the greatest exactitude and the keenest fidelity to nature. It is, at the same time, reminiscent of contemporary art, as expressed in the description of associations in surrealist painting, in Franz Kafka's dream world, in the montage-technique of Joyce's novels and the autocratic treatment of space in the film. Without the experience of these recent trends, mannerism could hardly have acquired its present significance for us.

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Even the most general characterization of mannerism contains very varying features, which it is difficult to gather into a uniform concept. A special difficulty lies in the fact that mannerism does not cover a particular, strictly confined historical period. It certainly represents the leading style between the third decade and the end of the century, but it does not dominate the century unopposed, and, particularly at the beginning and end of the period, it is mingled with baroque tendencies. The two lines are already closely intertwined in the later works of Raphael and Michelangelo. In these works there is already a competition between the passionately expressionistic aims of the baroque and the intellectualistic 'surrealist' outlook of mannerism. The two post-classical styles arise almost at the same time out of the intellectual crisis of the opening decades of the century: mannerism as the expression of the antagonism between the spiritualistic and the sensualistic trends of the age, and the baroque as the temporary settlement of the conflict on the basis of spontaneous feeling. After the sack of Rome, the baroque trend in art is gradually repressed, and there follows a period of over sixty years in which mannerism prevails. Some scholars interpret mannerism as a reaction following the early baroque, and the later baroque as the counter movement which then supersedes mannerism.¹⁴³ The history of sixteenth-century art would then consist in repeated clashes between mannerism and baroque with the temporary victory of the manneristic and the ultimate victory of the baroque tendency—but such a theory unjustifiably makes the early baroque begin before mannerism and exaggerates the transitory character of mannerism.¹⁴⁴ The conflict between the two styles is, in reality, more sociological than purely historical. Mannerism is the artistic style of an aristocratic, essentially international cultured class, the early baroque the expression of a more popular, more emotional, more nationalistic trend. The mature baroque triumphs over the more refined and exclusive style of mannerism, as the ecclesiastical propaganda of the Counter Reformation spreads and Catholicism again becomes a people's religion. The court art of the seventeenth century adapts the baroque to its specific needs; on the one hand, it works up baroque emotionalism into a magnificent theatricality and, on

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the other, it develops its latent classicism into the expression of an austere and clear-headed authoritarianism. But in the sixteenth century mannerism is the court style par excellence. At all the influential courts of Europe it is favoured against every other trend. The court painters of the Medici in Florence, Francis I in Fontainebleau, Philip II in Madrid, Rudolf II in Prague and Albrecht V in Munich are mannerists. With the manners and customs of the Italian courts, princely patronage spreads over the whole of Western Europe and is even intensified at certain courts, for example in Fontainebleau. The court of the Valois is already very big and pretentious and exhibits characteristics reminiscent of the later court of Versailles.¹⁴⁵ The milieu of the smaller courts is less dazzling, less public and, in some respects, more in line with the intimate, intellectualistic nature of mannerism. Bronzino and Vasari in Florence, Adriaen de Vries, Bartholomaeus Spranger, Hans von Aachen and Josef Heinz in Prague, Sustris and Candid in Munich, enjoy, in addition to the generosity of their patrons, the intimacy of a less pretentious environment. There is an affection even in the relationship between Philip II and his artists, which is surprising in view of the gloomy character of this monarch. The Portuguese painter Coelho is one of his closest intimates, a special corridor connects his rooms with the court artists' workshops and he is said to have been a painter himself.¹⁴⁶ When he becomes Emperor, Rudolf II moves into the Hradshin in Prague, shuts himself off from the world there with his astrologers, alchemists and artists, and has pictures painted, the refined eroticism and smart elegance of which suggest the hedonistic atmosphere of a rococo-like environment rather than the lonely and desolate dwelling of a maniac. The two cousins, Philip and Rudolf, always have money to spare for works of art and time for artists or art dealers; a work of art is the most certain means of obtaining an audience with them.¹⁴⁷ There is a jealous, secretive impulse in the art collecting of these rulers; the motives of propaganda and display fade almost completely into the background in contrast to the all-important motive of aesthetic hedonism.

The mannerism of the courts is, especially in its later form, a uniform and universally European movement—the first great

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international style since the Gothic. The source of its universal influence is the absolutism which spreads all over Western Europe and the vogue of the intellectually interested and artistically ambitious court households. In the sixteenth century the Italian language and Italian art attain universal influence reminiscent of the authority of Latin in the Middle Ages; mannerism is the particular form in which the artistic achievements of the Italian Renaissance are spread abroad. But this international character is not the only thing that mannerism has in common with the Gothic. The religious revival of the period, the new mysticism, the yearning for the spiritual, the disparagement of the body and the absorption in the experience of the supernatural, lead to a renewal of Gothic values, which only finds outward and often exaggerated expression in the slender forms of the mannerist style. The new spiritualism manifests itself rather in the tension between the spiritual and physical elements than in the complete overcoming of classical *kalokagathia*. The new formal ideals do not in any way imply a renunciation of the charms of physical beauty, but they portray the body struggling to give expression to the mind, they show it, as it were, turning and twisting, bending and writhing under the pressure of the mind, and hurled aloft by an excitement reminiscent of the ecstasies of Gothic art. By spiritualizing the human figure, the Gothic took the first great step in the development of modern expressionism, and now mannerism takes the second by breaking up the objectivism of the Renaissance, emphasizing the personal attitude of the artist and appealing to the personal experience of the onlooker.

6. THE AGE OF POLITICAL REALISM

Mannerism is the artistic expression of the crisis which convulses the whole of Western Europe in the sixteenth century and which extends to all fields of political, economic and cultural life. The political revolution begins with the invasion of Italy by France and Spain, the first imperialistic great powers of modern times—France the result of the emancipation of the crown from feudalism and the successful conclusion of the Hundred Years War, Spain, in its union with Germany and the Netherlands, the

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creation of chance, which gives rise to a political power unparalleled since the reign of Charlemagne. The political structure into which Charles V transforms the lands which fall to him by inheritance has been compared with the incorporation of Germany into the Frankish kingdom and described as the last great attempt to restore the unity of the Church and the Empire.¹⁴⁸ But this idea had had no real foundation since the end of the Middle Ages, and, instead of the desired unity, the political conflict arose which was to dominate European history for over four hundred years.

France and Spain had devastated and subjugated Italy and brought her to the brink of despair. When Charles VIII began his Italian campaign, the memory of the invasions of the German emperors in the Middle Ages had already completely faded. The Italians were always fighting each other, but they no longer knew what it meant to be controlled by a foreign power. They were dazed by the sudden invasion and were never able really to recover from the shock. The French first occupied Naples, then Milan and finally Florence. They were soon driven out of Southern Italy again by the Spaniards, but for whole decades Lombardy remained the scene of conflict between the two great rival powers. The French maintained themselves here until 1525, when Francis I was beaten in the Battle of Pavia and deported to Spain. Charles V now had Italy completely in his hands, and was no longer willing to submit to the intrigues of the Pope. In 1527 twelve thousand mercenaries moved against Rome to punish Clement VII. They joined forces with the Imperial army under the Constable of Bourbon, invaded the Eternal City and eight days later left it in ruins. They plundered the churches and monasteries, killed the priests and monks, raped and ill-treated the nuns, turned S. Peter's into a stable and the Vatican into a barracks. The very foundations of Renaissance culture seemed to be destroyed; the Pope was powerless, the prelates and bankers no longer felt safe in Rome. The members of the school of Raphael, who had dominated the artistic life of Rome, scattered and the city lost its artistic importance in the immediately following period.¹⁴⁹ In 1530 Florence also became the prey of the Spanish-German army. In agreement with the Pope, Charles V

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installed Alessandro Medici as a hereditary prince and thereby did away with the last remains of the Republic. The revolutionary disturbances which had broken out in Florence after the sack of Rome and which led to the expulsion of the Medici expedited the Pope's decision to come to an agreement with the Emperor. The head of the Pontifical State now becomes the ally of Spain: a Spanish viceroy resides in Naples and a Spanish governor in Milan; in Florence the Spaniards rule through the Medici, in Ferrara through the Este, in Mantua through the Gonzaga. The Spanish way of life and moral code, Spanish etiquette and Spanish elegance reign supreme in both the artistic centres of Italy, Rome and Florence. On the other hand, the intellectual dominion of the conquerors, whose culture is backward in comparison with the Italian, does not penetrate very deep and the connection of art with the native tradition survives. For even where Italian culture seems to succumb to the Hispanic influence it merely follows an evolutionary trend resulting from the presuppositions of the Cinquecento, which strives to achieve the formalism of court art quite apart from Spanish influence.¹⁵⁰

Charles V had conquered Italy with the help of German and Italian capital.¹⁵¹ Even the election of the Emperor was more or less a question of money and this was settled by a syndicate of bankers under the direction of the Fuggers. Electors were not cheap and the Pope asked no less than a hundred thousand ducats as the price for his support. From that moment finance capital dominated the world. The armies with which Charles conquered his enemies and kept his empire together were the creation of this power. It is true that his wars and those of his successors ruined the biggest capitalists of the age, but they secured world-power for capitalism. Maximilian I was not yet in a position to collect regular taxes and maintain a standing army; power still resided in essentials in the territorial armies. His grandson was the first to succeed in organizing the state finances according to purely business considerations, creating a uniform bureaucracy and a great mercenary army, and turning the feudal aristocracy into a court and official aristocracy. To be sure, the bases of the centralized principality were already very old. For, since the time that the landlords had let out their estates, instead of managing

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them themselves, their hangers-on had dwindled and the precondition for the predominance of the central authority had been created.¹⁵² Progress on the road to absolutism then proved to be a mere question of time—and money. As the income of the crown lay very largely in the taxes received from the non-aristocratic and non-privileged sections of the population, it was in the interest of the state to promote the economic prosperity of these classes.¹⁵³ This consideration had, however, to yield in every crisis before the interests of the great capitalists, whose help the kings could by no means renounce, despite their regular revenues.

When Charles V began to establish his rule in Italy, the centre of world trade had already shifted from the Mediterranean to the West as a result of the Turkish menace, the discovery of the new sea-routes and the emergence of the oceanic nations as economic powers. And now that in the organization of world trade the place of the small Italian states is taken by uniformly administered powers with incomparably greater territories and means at their disposal, the age of early capitalism comes to an end, and modern capitalism begins on a large scale. The introduction of precious metals from America to Spain, important as are its direct results, namely the increase in the supply of money and the rise in prices, is not sufficient to explain the beginning of the new era of capitalism. A much more important factor than the American silver, which the attempt is made, not with much success, to treat as mere wealth, that is to say, to immobilize and keep inside the country in accordance with the mercantilist theory—a much more important factor is the alliance between the state and capital, and, as a consequence of this alliance, the private capitalist foundations of Charles V's and Philip II's political enterprises.

From a very early date, it is possible to observe the trend away from the artisan undertaking, working with comparatively small capital resources, to the large-scale industrial undertaking and from the goods trade to the purely financial business. In the course of the fifteenth century this tendency gets the upper hand in the centres of Italian and Netherlandish trade. But it is not until the turn of the century that the small-scale undertaking based on individual craftsmanship is rendered out of date by large-scale industry, and money dealings become entirely separate

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from the goods trade. The loosening of all restraints on free competition leads, on the one hand, to the end of the corporative principle, on the other, to the shifting of economic activity to province more and more remote from production. The small works are incorporated into the larger units, but these are directed by capitalists who devote themselves increasingly to pure finance. Most men find it more and more difficult to fathom the decisive factors in economic affairs and are less and less able to exert any influence on them. The demands of the market attain a mysterious, but all the more inexorable reality; they hover suspended over men's heads like a lofty, inescapable power. The lower and middle ranks of society lose their feeling of security along with their influence in the guilds; but the capitalists do not feel secure either. If they intend to assert themselves, there can be no standstill for them; but as they grow, they also penetrate into more and more dangerous spheres. The second half of the century produces an unbroken series of financial crises; in 1557 the French and the Spanish states go bankrupt, and in 1575 the Spanish bankruptcy recurs—catastrophes which not only shake the foundations of the leading business houses, but mean the ruin of innumerable lesser livelihoods.

The most tempting business is transactions in state loans; but, in view of the heavy indebtedness of the princes, it is, at the same time, the most dangerous. Besides the bankers and professional speculators, the middle classes, with their deposits in the banks and their commitments on the only recently created stock exchanges, also had a far-reaching interest in the gamble. As the financial resources of the individual banking houses prove inadequate to meet the capital needs of the monarchs, the stock exchanges in Antwerp and Lyons also begin to be called upon for credits.¹⁵⁴ Partly in connection with these transactions, all possible kinds of stock-exchange speculation develop: dealing in stocks, time-bargaining, arbitrage, insurance business.¹⁵⁵ The whole of Western Europe is seized by the stock-exchange mentality and a fever of speculation, which rises to a climax when the English and Netherlandish overseas trading companies offer the public the chance of sharing in their often fantastic profits. The consequences are catastrophic for the broad masses: unemploy-

ment as a result of the transfer of interest from agricultural to industrial production, overcrowding of the cities, rising prices and low wages are experienced everywhere. Social dissatisfaction reaches its climax in the country where, for a time, the greatest accumulation of capital takes place—Germany—and it breaks out in the most neglected class—the peasantry. It comes to a head in direct connection with the religious peasant movement; partly because this movement is itself conditioned by the social dynamism of the age, partly because the opposition forces still find it easiest to meet under the common banner of a religious idea. It is not merely in the Anabaptist movement that the social and religious revolutions form an inseparable unity; contemporary voices, such as the outbursts of an Ulrich von Hutten against protectionism and money economy, against usury and land speculation, in a word, against 'Fuggerei', as he calls it,¹⁵⁶ suggest rather that dissatisfaction is generally still in a chaotic and ill-defined stage of development. It unites the classes who are more interested in the religious than the social revolution, with those who are obviously more or even exclusively interested in the social revolution. But, however these various elements are distributed among themselves, the Middle Ages are still so near that all conceivable ideas are expressed with the greatest ease within the conceptual and emotional patterns of religious faith. That explains the obscure and feverish condition, the universal, vague expectation of redemption, which the religious and social factors combine to produce.

But the decisive fact for the sociology of the Reformation is that the movement started in a wave of indignation against the corruption of the Church, and that the avarice of the clergy, the trading in indulgences and ecclesiastical offices, was the immediate cause by which it was set in motion. The oppressed and exploited classes insisted thereafter that the biblical condemnation of the rich and the promises made to the poor referred not merely to the Kingdom of Heaven. The middle-class elements, however, who co-operated with enthusiasm in the struggle against the feudal privileges of the clergy, not only withdrew immediately their own aims were achieved, but resisted any progress that might have injured their interests, because it favoured those of

the lower classes. Protestantism, which began as a popular movement on the widest possible basis, now rested for the most part on the local sovereigns and on these middle-class elements. With a genuine political flair, Luther seems to have judged the prospects of the revolutionary classes to be so unfavourable that he gradually sided completely with those ranks of society whose interests were bound up with the preservation of law and order. In so doing, he not only simply left the masses in the lurch, but he even stirred up the princes and their followers against the 'murderous and rapacious peasant rabble'. Obviously, he wanted at all cost to prevent the impression of having anything to do with the social revolution.

Luther's betrayal must have had a devastating effect.¹⁵⁷ The explanation of the scarcity of direct evidence on this point is probably that the betrayed classes had no real spokesmen outside the ranks of the Anabaptists. But the gloomy outlook of the age is an indirect expression of the disillusion which must have been felt in wide circles of the population at the way the Reformation was developing. Luther's 'sensible' attitude was a terrifying example of political realism. It was certainly not the first time that religious ideals had entered into a compromise with practical life—the whole history of the Christian Church seems to consist in the striking of a balance between the things that are God's and the things that are Caesar's—but the earlier concessions took place gradually, in scarcely noticeable transitions, and, moreover, in a period in which the background of political events was mostly hidden from the public. The degeneration of Protestantism, on the other hand, proceeded in the full daylight of humanism, in an age of printing, of pamphlets, of universal interest in and competence to judge of political matters. The intellectual leaders of the age may have been totally uninterested in the peasants' cause and have stood for diametrically opposed concerns, but the spectacle of the perversion of a great idea could not leave them unaffected, even if they were hostile to the Reformation. Luther's standpoint in the peasant problem was indeed merely a symptom of the course which any revolutionary idea had inevitably to take in the age of absolutism.¹⁵⁸

In the first half of the century, that is, in the period before the

wars of religion, the Council of Trent and the uncompromising Counter Reformation, Protestantism presented Western Europe not merely with an ecclesiastical and denominational problem, but—like the Sophistic movement in the classical world, the enlightenment in the eighteenth century and socialism in our day—with a problem of conscience from which no morally responsible person could entirely escape. After the Reformation there not only ceased to be any good Catholics not convinced of the corruption of the Church and the necessity for its purification, but the influence of the ideas originating in Germany went much deeper: people became aware of the inwardness, other-worldliness and uncompromising quality of the Christian faith which had been lost, and they felt an unappeasable longing that these characteristics might be restored. What aroused and inspired good Christians everywhere, and above all the idealists and intellectuals in Italy, was the anti-materialism of the Reformation movement, the doctrine of justification by faith, the idea of direct communion with God and of the priesthood of all believers. But now that Protestantism had become the creed of princes interested merely in politics and of a middle class interested above all in business, and was in the way to becoming a new Church, these idealists and intellectuals, who had flirted with it as a purely spiritual movement, were certainly the most disappointed of all.

The desire for a new spirituality and a deepening of the religious life was nowhere stronger than in Rome, and nowhere was there a greater awareness of the danger with which the unity of the Church was threatened by the German Reformation, even though these feelings and thoughts did not originate in the immediate entourage of the Pope. The leaders of the Catholic reform movement were mostly enlightened humanists, who entertained very progressive ideas about the infirmities of the Church and the severity of the operation needed to cure its ills, but their radicalism stopped short at questioning the absolute authority of the papacy. They all wanted to reform the Church from within. But they certainly wanted to reform it, and they proposed to start by convening a free and universal Church council. Clement VII would not hear of it, however—one could

never tell what would come out of such a council. About the year 1520, there was formed in Rome the 'Oratory of Divine Love', an association which was intended to set an example of piety and to make suggestions for Church reform. Some of the most learned and respected members of the Roman clergy, such as Sadoletto, Giberti, Thiene and Caraffa, belonged to it. The sack of Rome also put an end to this enterprise; the members scattered and it was some time before they were again able to combine their forces. The movement was continued in Venice where Sadoletto, Contarini and Pole were its main supports. Here, as afterwards again in Rome, the target was the reconciliation with Lutheranism and the salvaging of the moral content of the Reformation for the benefit of the Catholic Church, especially the doctrine of justification by faith.

Vittoria Colonna and her friends, of whom Michelangelo was one from 1538 onwards, were closely connected with this humanistically educated circle whose main interest was in religion. In his *Conversations on Painting* (1539), the Portuguese painter Francisco de Hollanda describes the religious enthusiasm of this society to which he was introduced by a friend, and reports, among other things, on their meetings in the church of S. Silvestro on Monte Cavallo, where a famous theologian of the time expounded the letters of St. Paul. Here, in the company of Vittoria Colonna and her friends, Michelangelo probably received the decisive stimuli which led to his spiritual rebirth and the spiritualistic style of his later works. The religious development which he went through was thoroughly typical of the transitional period leading from the Renaissance to the Counter Reformation, but the one extraordinary thing about it was the passionateness of his inward transformation and the depth of expression which it received in his works. Even as a youth Michelangelo seems to have been very responsive to religious stimuli. The personality and the fate of Savonarola made an indelible impression on him; during the whole of his life he remained aloof from the activities of the world, an attitude which must have originated in this experience. As he grew older, his piety became deeper; it became more and more fervent, uncompromising and exclusive, until it completely filled his soul, and not only displaced his Renaissance

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ideals but made him doubt the purpose and value of his whole artistic activity. The change did not take place by any means all at once; it proceeded step by step. The signs of a manneristic conception of art, characterized by the disturbance of the sense of harmony, are already evident in the Medici tombs and the corner-spandrels of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. In the 'Last Judgement' (1534-41) the new spirit holds unrestricted sway; it is no longer a monument of beauty and perfection, of power and youth, that arises here, but a picture of bewilderment and despair, a cry for redemption from the chaos which suddenly threatens to swallow up the world of the Renaissance. Devotion and the desire to extinguish all earthly, physical and sensual, things within oneself dominates the work. The spatial harmony of Renaissance compositions is gone. The space in which the representation moves is unreal, discontinuous and neither seen uniformly, nor constructed in accordance with a uniform scale of measurement. The conscious, often ostentatious infringement of the old principles of organization, the deformation and disintegration of the Renaissance world-picture, is expressed in every aspect of the work, above all in the waiving of the rules of perspective, one of the most striking signs of which is the lack of foreshortening and, therefore, the exaggeration in the treatment of the upper figures in the composition in relation to the lower.¹⁵⁹ The 'Last Judgement' in the Sistine Chapel is the first important artistic creation of modern times which is *no longer* 'beautiful' and which refers back to those medieval works of art which were *not yet* beautiful but merely expressive. Michelangelo's work is nevertheless very different from them; it represents a protest, achieved with obvious difficulty, against beautiful, perfect, immaculate form, a manifesto in the shapelessness of which there is something aggressive and self-destructive. It is not only a denial of the artistic ideals which the Botticellis and Peruginos sought to realize in the same place, but also of the aims once pursued by Michelangelo himself in the representations on the ceiling of the same Sistine Chapel, and it surrenders those ideals of beauty to which the whole chapel owes its existence and all the building and painting of the Renaissance its origin. And it is not merely a question of the experiment of an irresponsible eccentric, but of

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a work which, coming from the hand of the most distinguished artist in the Christian world, was intended to adorn the most important place which Christendom had in its power to offer, the main wall of the Pope's domestic chapel. Here indeed was a world in decline.

The frescoes of the Cappella Paolina, the 'Conversion of St. Paul' and the 'Crucifixion of St. Peter' (1542-9), represent the next phase in Michelangelo's development. There is no longer the slightest trace of the harmonious order of the Renaissance in these pictures. The figures have something unfree, something of dreamy irresolution about them, as if they were labouring under a mysterious, inescapable constraint, under a pressure whose origin is beyond discovery. Empty portions of space alternate with weirdly overfilled space, barren stretches of desert and tightly packed clusters of human beings stand adjacent to each other, as in a bad dream. The optical uniformity and continuity of space is abolished; the spatial depth is not achieved step by step, but, as it were, rent open; the diagonals break through the picture and bore space-engulfing holes into the background. The only purpose served by the spatial coefficients of the composition seems to be to express the bewilderment and homelessness of the figures. There is no longer any coherence between the figures and the stage they occupy, between man and the world. The performers of the action lose all their individual particularity; the marks of age, sex and temperament are blurred, everything strives towards generality, abstraction and schematism. The importance of individual personality fades beside the enormous significance of humanity in general. After the completion of the frescoes of the Cappella Paolina, Michelangelo produced no more large works; the 'Pietà' in Florence Cathedral (1550-5) and the 'Pietà Rondanini' (1556-64) are, together with the drawings of a Crucifixion, the sole artistic productions of the last fifteen years of his life, and even these works merely draw the inevitable conclusions from the decision which he had already made formerly. As Simmel says, there is in the 'Pietà Rondanini', 'no more material against which the soul might be called upon to defend itself, the body has given up the struggle for its independence, the phenomena presented are incorporeal'.¹⁶⁰ This work is hardly

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any longer an artistic matter at all, it is rather the transition from a work of art to an ecstatic confession; a unique exposure of that spiritual interregnum, where the aesthetic meets the metaphysical, an act of expression which, hovering between the sensual and the supersensual, seems to be wrested from the mind by force. What is finally produced here is near to blankness—shapeless, toneless and without articulation.

The ultimate failure of Contarini's negotiations at the Diet of Ratisbon in 1541 marks the end of the first 'humanistic' period of the Catholic reform movement. The days of enlightened, philanthropic, tolerant men, like Sadoletto, Contarini and Pole, are numbered. The principle of realism triumphs all along the line. The idealists have proved themselves unable to master reality. Paul III (1534–49) already represents the transition from the lenient Renaissance to the intolerant Counter Reformation. In 1542 the Inquisition is introduced, in 1543 the censorship of printed matter, and in 1545 the Council of Trent is opened. The lack of success in Ratisbon leads to a militant attitude and to the restoration of Catholicism by authority and force. The persecution of the humanists in the ranks of the higher clergy is begun. The new spirit of fanaticism and hostility to the Renaissance is apparent everywhere, most strikingly of all in the new monastic foundations, the new asceticism and in the emergence of new saints, such as Carlo Borromeo, Filippo Neri, John of the Cross and St. Teresa.¹⁶¹ But nothing is more typical of the change in the general development of affairs than the foundation of the Jesuit order, which was to become a model of dogmatic strictness and ecclesiastical discipline, and which became the first embodiment of the totalitarian idea. With its principle of the end justifying the means, it signifies the supreme triumph of the idea of political realism and gives the sharpest possible expression to the basic intellectual characteristic of the century.

Machiavelli was the first to develop the theory and programme of political realism; in his work is to be found the key to the whole world-outlook of mannerism which wrestles with this idea so desperately. But Machiavelli did not invent 'Machiavellism', that is, the separation of political practice from Christian ideals—every petty Renaissance prince was a ready-made Machiavellian.

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It was merely the doctrine of political rationalism which he was the first to formulate, and he was, at the same time, the first clear-headed advocate of the application of conscious, systematic realism to practical affairs. Machiavelli was, however, only an exponent and spokesman of his age. If his doctrine had been nothing more than the extravagant whim of a clever and cruel philosopher, it would not have had the shattering influence which it in fact had, nor would it have moved the conscience of every morally endowed person, as it in fact did. And if it had been only a matter of the political methods of the petty Italian tyrants, his writings would certainly have caused no more excitement than the horrific stories which were spread abroad about the morals of these tyrants. Meanwhile, history produced more striking examples of realism than the crimes of the gang leader and the poisoner whom Machiavelli quotes as his prototype. For what else was Charles V, the patron of the Catholic Church, who threatened the life of the Holy Father and had the capital of Christendom destroyed, if not an unscrupulous realist? And Luther, the founder of the modern people's religion par excellence, who betrayed the common people to the overlords and made the religion of inwardness the creed of the most efficiently practical stratum of society and the one most deeply involved in the interests of the world? And Ignatius Loyola, who would have crucified Christ a second time, if the teachings of the risen Lord had threatened the stability of the Church, as in Dostoevsky's story? And any prince of the age one cares to mention, who sacrificed the welfare of his subjects to the interests of the capitalists? And was not the whole capitalistic economy in the long run simply an illustration of Machiavelli's theory? Did it not show clearly that reality was obedient to its own stern necessity, that all mere ideas were powerless when faced with its relentless logic, and that the only alternative was to submit to or be destroyed by it?

It is scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of Machiavelli for his contemporaries and the next few generations. The whole century was frightened, intimidated and thoroughly agitated by its encounter with the first master of exposure, the forerunner of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. One only needs to

recall the English drama of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages, in which Machiavelli had become a hackneyed stage figure, the quintessence of all fraud and hypocrisy, and the proper name 'Machiavelli' had begun to change into the generic name of *machiavelli*, to realize the extent to which he engaged the human imagination. It was not the violence of the tyrants which caused the general shock and not the panegyrics of their court poets which filled the world with indignation, but the justification of their methods by a man who allowed the gospel of gentleness to stand alongside the philosophy of force, the rights of the noble alongside those of the clever, and the morality of the 'lions' alongside that of the 'foxes'.¹⁶² Ever since there existed rulers and ruled, masters and servants, exploiters and exploited, there also existed two different orders of morality, one for the powerful, the other for the powerless. Machiavelli was merely the first to make men conscious of this moral dualism, and the first to attempt to justify the recognition of different standards of conduct in state affairs from those current in private life, and, above all, the recognition of the fact that the Christian moral principles of fidelity and truthfulness are not absolutely binding on the state and the prince. Machiavellism with its doctrine of *dual morality*¹⁶³ had only one analogy in the history of Western man, and that was the doctrine of the 'dual truth' which rent the culture of the Middle Ages in twain and ushered in the age of nominalism and naturalism. There now arose in the moral world a cleft similar to that which had then arisen in the intellectual, only, this time, the shock was greater to the extent that more crucial values were at stake. The break was in fact so profound that a person familiar with any of the more important literary products of the period should be able to establish whether it was written before or after its author's encounter with the ideas of Machiavelli. To become acquainted with them it was, incidentally, not in the least necessary to read Machiavelli's own writings—which were in fact read by very few; the idea of political realism and of 'dual morality' was common property, and was conveyed to people by the most devious routes. Machiavelli found followers in every walk of life, though the devil's disciples were sometimes suspected in places where they did not in fact exist at all; every liar seemed to

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speak the language of Machiavelli and all sharp-wittedness was distrusted.

The Council of Trent became the supreme training ground of political realism. With sober matter-of-factness it adopted the measures which seemed best suited to fit the institutions of the Church and the principles of the faith to the conditions and demands of modern life. The intellectual leaders of the Council wanted to draw a sharp line of demarcation between orthodoxy and heresy. If secession could no longer be prevented, at any rate the further spread of the evil should be stopped. It was recognized that it was more sensible in the given circumstances to emphasize the differences than to conceal them, and to raise rather than lessen the demands made on the faithful. The victory of this standpoint meant the end of the unity of Western Christendom.¹⁶⁴ But soon after the conclusion of the Tridentine deliberations, which lasted eighteen years, another change of policy followed, dictated by a sense of profound realism, which substantially mitigated the severity of the period during which the Council was sitting, especially in matters of art. There was no more need to be afraid of misunderstandings in the interpretation of orthodoxy ; the order of the day was now to brighten up the gloom of militant Catholicism, to enlist the senses in the propagation of the faith, to make the forms of divine service more pleasing and to turn the church into a resplendent and attractive centre for the whole community. These were tasks to which the baroque was first able to do justice, however; the stern decrees of the Council of Trent were still regarded as authoritative during the whole period of mannerism—but it was the same principles of systematic, sober realism which suggested in the one case the way of ascetic severity, in the other, adulation of the senses.

The convening of the Council meant the end of liberalism in the Church's relationship to art. Art produced for Church purposes was placed under the supervision of theologians, and, especially in the case of large-scale undertakings, the painters had to keep strictly to the instructions of their spiritual advisers. Giov. Paolo Lomazzo, the greatest authority of the time in matters of art theory, desires explicitly that the painter should seek the advice of theologians in the representation of religious sub-

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jects.¹⁶⁵ In Caprarola, Taddeo Zuccari submits to his instructions even on the choice of colours, and Vasari not only raises no objections to the directives he receives from the Dominican art scholar Vincenzo Borghini during his work in the Cappella Paolina, but he even feels uncomfortable when Borghini is not near him.¹⁶⁶ The intellectual content of the manneristic fresco cycles and altar-pieces is mostly so complicated that even in cases where there is no direct evidence of co-operation between the painters and theologians, such co-operation must be posited. Just as medieval theology not only regains its rights at the Council of Trent, but deepens its influence, in that many questions the discussion of which was left unreservedly to scholasticism in the Middle Ages are now decided by authority,¹⁶⁷ so, too, the choice of artistic media is now laid down by those who commission works of art for the Church more strictly in many respects than in the Middle Ages, when in most cases it could simply be left to the artist. Above all, it is now forbidden to provide a place in churches for works of art that are inspired or influenced by false doctrines. Artists have to conform exactly to the canonic form of biblical stories and to the official interpretation of questions of dogma. In Michelangelo's 'Last Judgement', Andrea Gilio criticizes the unbearded Christ, the mythological Charon ferry, the gestures of the saints, who, in his opinion, behave as if they were attending a bullfight, the arrangement of the apocalyptic angels who, contrary to Scripture, are standing next to each other, instead of being assigned to the four corners of the picture, etc. Veronese is summoned to the tribunal of the Inquisition because, in his 'Supper in the House of Levi', he adds all kinds of arbitrarily chosen motifs, such as dwarfs, dogs, a fool with a parrot and other similar things, to the persons named in the Bible narrative. The decrees of the Council forbid the representation of the nude as well as the introduction of suggestive, indecent and profane representations into holy places. All the writings on religious art which appear after the Council of Trent, above all the *Dialogo degli errori dei pittori* by Gilio (1564) and the *Riposo* by Raffaele Borghini (1584), are against all forms of nudity in ecclesiastical art.¹⁶⁸ Gilio desires that, even in cases where a character could be portrayed in the nude in full accordance with the biblical record,

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the artist should add at least a loin-cloth. Carlo Borromeo has all pictures which seem indecent to him removed from the sacred places within his sphere of influence. At the end of a successful life, the sculptor Ammanati disowns the entirely harmless nudes of his youth. Nothing is more typical of the intolerant spirit of this epoch than the treatment suffered by Michelangelo's 'Last Judgement'. In 1559, Paul IV commissions Daniele da Volterra to cover up the naked figures in the fresco which appear to be especially provoking. In 1566, Pius V has further offensive portions of the fresco removed. Finally, Clement VIII desires to have the whole fresco destroyed and is restrained from carrying out his plan only by a petition submitted by the Academy of S. Luca. But even more remarkable than the behaviour of the Popes is the fact that Vasari himself—in the second edition of his *Vite*—condemns the nakedness of the figures in the 'Last Judgement' as unsuitable by reason of their ecclesiastical destination.

The period of the Council of Trent has been described as the 'birthday of prudery'.¹⁶⁹ It is well known that cultures based on aristocracy or other-worldly values are adverse to the representation of the nude; but neither the aristocratic society of early classical antiquity nor the Christian society of the Middle Ages was 'prudish'. They avoided the nude, but were not afraid of it. Their attitude to the physical was much too clear-cut for them ever to have wanted both to conceal and to stress the sexual by introducing the 'fig leaf'. The ambivalence of erotic feelings does not arise until the onset of mannerism, and it is bound up with the whole dichotomy of this culture in which the greatest polarities are united: the most spontaneous feeling with the most intolerable affectation, the strictest possible belief in authority with the most arbitrary individualism and the most chaste representations with the lewdest forms of art. Prudishness is here not merely the conscious reaction against the provoking lasciviousness of the art produced independently of the Church, such as is cultivated at most courts, but it is also itself a form of suppressed lasciviousness.

The Council of Trent was antipathetic to every aspect of formalism and sensualism in art. In the true spirit of the Council, Gilio complains that painters are no longer concerned with the

subject-matter but only with the dazzling display of their own artificially developed skill. The same opposition to virtuosity and the same demand for a direct emotional content is expressed in the Council's purgation of church music, particularly in the subordination of musical form to the text and the recognition of Palestrina as the absolute model. But, in spite of its moral rigorism and its anti-formalistic attitude, the Tridentinum was, in contrast to the Reformation, by no means inimical to art. Erasmus's well-known saying—*ubicumque regnat lutheranismus, ibi literarum est interitus*—cannot be applied in any way to the enactments of the Council of Trent. Luther saw in poetry, at the most, a servant of theology and he could not discover anything praiseworthy at all in the fine arts. He condemned the 'idolatry' of the Catholic Church just as he condemned pagan image-worship. And he had in mind not only the devotional images of the Renaissance, which, of course, had only very little to do with religion, but all artistic externalization of religious feelings whatsoever—the 'idolatry' which he saw even in the mere adornment of churches with pictures. All the heretical movements of the Middle Ages were fundamentally iconoclastic in outlook. Both the Albigenses and the Waldenses as well as the Lollards and the Hussites condemned the profanation of the faith by the glamour of art.¹⁷⁰ But in the Reformers, particularly in Karlstadt, who has pictures of the saints burnt in Wittenberg in 1521, in Zwingli, who in 1524 persuades the Zürich city council to have works of art removed from the churches and destroyed, in Calvin, who sees no difference between worshipping an image and taking pleasure in a work of art,¹⁷¹ and, finally, in the Anabaptists, whose hostility to art is part of their hostility to worldly culture, the doubts about art entertained by earlier heretics are worked up into a real iconophobia. Their condemnation of art is not merely much more uncompromising and consistent than Savonarola's attitude, which was, intrinsically, not iconoclastic at all, only purificatory,¹⁷² but it is also even more radical than the iconoclasm of the Byzantines, which was, as we know, directed not so much against pictures in themselves as against those who profited from image-worship.

The Counter Reformation, which allowed art to play the

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greatest conceivable part in divine worship, desired not merely to remain true to the Christian tradition of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, in order thereby to emphasize its antagonism to the Reformation, to be friendly to art, whereas the heretics were hostile, but it desired, above all, to use art as a weapon against the doctrines of heterodoxy. The aesthetic culture of the Renaissance had infinitely enhanced the quality of art as a means of propaganda; it became more supple, more natural, and, therefore, more useful as a means of propaganda, so that the Counter Reformation had at its disposal an instrument for influencing public opinion unknown to the Middle Ages. Opinions are divided as to whether the original and direct artistic expression of the Counter Reformation is to be seen in the mannerism or in the baroque.¹⁷³ Mannerism is nearer to the Counter Reformation chronologically, and the austere spiritualistic approach of the Tridentine epoch is expressed more purely in mannerism than in the voluptuous baroque. But the artistic programme of the Counter Reformation, the propagation of Catholicism through the medium of art among the broad masses of the population, is first accomplished by the baroque. It is obvious that what was in the mind of the Council of Trent was not an art which, like mannerism, appealed merely to a thin stratum of intellectuals, but a people's art, such as the baroque in fact became. At the time of the Council, mannerism was the most widespread and the most live form of art, but it in no way represented the particular direction which was best calculated to solve the artistic problems of the Counter Reformation. The fact that it had to yield to the baroque is to be explained, above all, by its inability to master the ecclesiastical tasks committed to art by the Counter Reformation.

The mannerists found no more than a weak support in the doctrines of the Church. The instructions issued by the Council offered the artists no substitute for their previous incorporation in the system of Christian culture and the corporative order of society. For, apart from the fact that these instructions were more of a negative than a positive nature, and that there were no sanctions to support them outside ecclesiastical art, Church people could not help being conscious that, in view of the differentiated

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structure of the art of their age, they could, by an all too extreme rigour, easily destroy the effectiveness of the very means of which they wanted to make use. In the circumstances of the time there could be no question of a purely hieratic organization of artistic production comparable to that of the Middle Ages. However good Christians and however deeply religious they were, artists could not simply renounce the secular and pagan elements in the artistic tradition; they had to endure the inner contradiction between the different factors of their means of expression and to accept it as unresolved and apparently irresolvable. Those who were unable to bear the weight of the conflict either escaped into the intoxication of aestheticism or, as Michelangelo did, into the 'arms of Christ'. For Michelangelo's way out of the conflict was also merely an escape. What medieval artist would have felt induced by his experience of God to give up his artistic work, as he did? The deeper the religious feelings of the medieval artist, the deeper was the source from which he was able to draw his artistic inspiration. And not merely because he was completely a believing Christian, but also because he was completely a creative artist. The moment he stopped being artistically productive, he ceased to be anything at all; Michelangelo, on the other hand, remained, even after he had finished his work as an artist, a very interesting person both in the eyes of the world and in his own eyes. In the Middle Ages a conflict of conscience, such as Michelangelo's, would have been quite impossible, not only because an artist could hardly conceive of any other way of serving God except through his art, but also because the rigid social organization of the period offered a man no possibility of making a livelihood outside his own trade and the traditions of his trade. In the sixteenth century, on the other hand, an artist was able to be well-to-do and independent, like Michelangelo, or find extravagant patrons, like Parmigianino, or was also prepared to put up with failure after failure, to lead a questionable life outside ordered society and hold fast to his own ideas, like Pontormo.

The artist of the age of mannerism had lost almost everything that was able to give a foothold to the artist-craftsman of the Middle Ages and, in many respects, even to the Renaissance artist in process of emancipating himself from the thralldom of crafts-

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manship: a solid position in society, the protection of the guild, a clear-cut relation to the Church, and an, on the whole, unproblematical relation to tradition. The culture of individualism provided him with innumerable openings that were not available to the medieval artist, but it set him in a vacuum of freedom, in which he was often on the point of losing himself. In the intellectual revolution of the sixteenth century, which impelled artists to undertake a total revision of their world-view, they were unable either completely to entrust themselves to leadership coming from outside or to rely entirely on their own instincts. They were torn by force, on the one hand, and by freedom, on the other, and stood defenceless against the chaos that threatened to destroy the whole order of the intellectual world. In them we encounter for the first time the modern artist with his inward strife, his zest for life and his escapism, his traditionalism and his rebelliousness, his exhibitionistic subjectivism and the reserve with which he tries to hold back the ultimate secret of his personality. From now on the number of cranks, eccentrics and psychopaths among artists increases from day to day. Parmigianino devotes himself to alchemy in his later years, becomes melancholy and entirely neglects his appearance. From his youth upwards, Pontormo suffers from serious fits of depression and becomes more and more timid and reserved as the years pass.¹⁷⁴ Rosso commits suicide. Tasso dies engulfed in mental darkness. Greco sits behind curtained windows in broad daylight,¹⁷⁵ to see things which an artist of the Renaissance would probably not have been able to see at all, but which an artist of the Middle Ages would have been able to see, if at all, even in daylight.

A change corresponding to the general intellectual crisis occurs in the theory of art. In contrast to the naturalism, or, as it would be called in philosophical terminology, the 'naïve dogmatism', of the Renaissance, mannerism is the first movement to raise the epistemological question: for the first time the agreement of art with nature is felt to constitute a problem.¹⁷⁶ For the Renaissance, nature was the source of artistic form; the artist achieved it through an act of synthesis, by gathering and combining the scattered elements of beauty in nature. The patterns

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of art were, therefore, based on an objective prototype though organized by the subject. Mannerism drops the theory of art as a copying of nature; in accordance with the new doctrine, art creates not merely *from* nature but *like* nature. Both Lomazzo¹⁷⁷ and Federigo Zuccari¹⁷⁸ think that art has a spontaneous origin in the mind of the artist. According to Lomazzo, the artistic genius works in art as the divine genius works in nature, and according to Zuccari, the artistic idea—the *disegno interno*—is the manifestation of the divine in the artist's soul. Zuccari is the first to ask explicitly, whence art derives its inner substance of truth, whence comes the agreement between the forms of the mind and the forms of reality, if the 'idea' of art is not acquired from nature. The answer is that the true forms of things arise in the artist's soul as a result of his direct participation in the divine mind. Here, too, as already in scholasticism and later in Descartes, the inborn ideas imprinted on the human soul by God form the criterion of certainty. God creates an agreement between nature, which produces real things, and man, who brings forth works of art.¹⁷⁹ But Zuccari lays more stress on the spontaneity of the mind than do not only the scholastics but also Descartes. The human mind had already become conscious of its creative nature in the Renaissance, and the derivation of its spontaneity from God merely serves, in the mind of the mannerists, to enhance its justification. The naïve subject-object relationship between the artist and nature, the final result of Renaissance aesthetics, was now undone; the genius feels without a foothold and in need of completion. The doctrine of the individualism and irrationalism of artistic creativity which arose in the Renaissance, above all the thesis that art is unteachable and unlearnable, and that the artist is born, is not stated, however, in its extreme form until the age of mannerism, namely by Giordano Bruno, who speaks not merely of the freedom but even of the unsystematic nature of artistic work. 'Rules are not the source of poetry,' he thinks, 'but poetry is the source of rules, and there are as many rules as there are real poets.'¹⁸⁰ This is the aesthetic doctrine of an age which attempts to combine the idea of the God-inspired artist with that of the autocratic genius.

The antagonism between conformity to rule and lack of rule,

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between discipline and freedom, divine objectivity and human subjectivity, which governs this doctrine, also finds expression in the transformation of the idea of the Academy. The original purpose and spirit of the academies was a liberal one: they served as a means of emancipating the artist from the guild and of raising him above the level of the craftsman. The members of the academies were everywhere relieved sooner or later of the obligation of belonging to a guild and of keeping to the restrictions of the guild system. In Florence the members of the *Accademia del Disegno* enjoyed these privileges as early as 1571. The purpose of the academies was, however, not merely representative but also educational; they were intended to replace the guilds not only as corporations but also as teaching institutions. As such they turned out to be, after all, nothing but another form of the old strait-laced, anti-progressive institution they were supposed to be replacing. Instruction in the academies was organized even more strictly than in the guilds. The irresistible development was towards the ideal of a canon of education, which, though it was only realized in France in the next period, had its origin here. Counter Reformation, authority, academicism, and mannerism are all different aspects of the same frame of mind, and it is by no means a coincidence that Vasari, the first systematic mannerist, was also the founder of the first regular academy of art. The older academy-like institutions represented mere improvisations; they were started without any systematic curriculum, were mostly limited to a series of unconnected evening courses and were made up of a constantly changing group of teachers and pupils. The academies of the age of mannerism were, on the other hand, organized from top to bottom,¹⁸¹ and the teacher-pupil relationship was just as clear-cut, though organized on different principles, as the master-apprentice relationship in the guild workshops. In many places artists had already formed, alongside the guilds, religious and charitable institutions organized on more liberal lines, the so-called confraternities. There was one in Florence too, the 'Compagnia di S. Luca', and Vasari linked up his suggestions with this institution, when he induced the Grand Duke Cosimo I to found the 'Accademia del Disegno' in 1561. In contrast to the authoritarian

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organization of the guilds and in accordance with the elective principles of the fraternities, membership of Vasari's academy was an honour conferred only on independent and creative artists. A solid, many-sided cultural background was one of the indispensable preconditions of admission. The Grand Duke and Michelangelo were 'capi' of the institution, Vincenzo Borghini was elected 'luogo tenente', that is to say, president, and thirty-six artists were chosen to be members. The teachers were to instruct a number of young people, partly in their own studios, partly in the rooms of the academy. Every year three masters were to inspect the work of the 'giovani' in the workshops of the city. Workshop instruction, therefore, did not by any means come to an end, only the theoretical auxiliary subjects, such as geometry, perspective and anatomy, were to be taught in regular academic courses.¹⁸² In 1593, thanks to the initiative of Federigo Zuccari, the Roman academy of St. Luke was raised to the status of an art school with a permanent site and systematic teaching, and as such it served as a model for all later foundations. But this academy also remained, like the one in Florence, an essentially representative body and was not a teaching institution in the modern sense.¹⁸³ It is true that Zuccari possessed very concrete ideas about the tasks and proper methods of an art school, which provided a basis for the whole system and organization of academies, but the old craft teaching methods were still so deep-rooted in his generation that he was unable to make headway with his plans. In Rome the educational purpose was probably more in the forefront than in Florence, where the purely political and organizational aspects of art as a professional career played a leading rôle among the aims of the institution,¹⁸⁴ but what was actually achieved here also lagged far behind what had been planned. In his opening speech, which characteristically also contains an exhortation to cultivate virtue and piety, Zuccari stresses the importance of lectures and discussions on questions of art theory. Among the problems treated pride of place is given to the dispute about the order of precedence in the arts, which had become a matter of general interest since the Renaissance, and to the definition of the basic concept and slogan of the whole theory of mannerism, *disegno*, that is, the rough plan, the artistic

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idea behind the work. The lectures given by members of the academy were also published later and made generally available to the public; they are the prototype of the famous *conférences* of the Paris Academy, which were to play such an important part in the artistic life of the following two centuries. But the art academies were by no means concerned exclusively with problems of professional organization, art education and discussions on aesthetics; even Vasari's institution already became a centre of consultation upon all kinds of artistic questions; questions were asked about the setting of works of art, it was asked to recommend artists, to give an expert judgement on building plans and to confirm export licences.

For three centuries academicism dominated artistic policy, the public advancement of the arts, art education, the principles according to which prizes and scholarships were awarded, the organization of art exhibitions and, to some extent, art criticism. To its influence must be ascribed, above all, the fact that the tradition of earlier ages, which was based on organic growth, is replaced by the convention of classical models and the eclectic imitation of the masters of the Renaissance. Nineteenth-century naturalism was the first movement to succeed in shaking the reputation of the academies, and to give a new direction to the theory of art, which had been classically inclined ever since their inception. In Italy itself, it is true that the idea of the academy of art never underwent the rigid formalization and contraction to which it was subjected when it was transferred to France; but even in Italy the academies gradually became more and more exclusive. In the beginning membership of these institutes was intended merely to differentiate the artist from the craftsman, but soon academic status became a means of raising some artists, namely the more cultured and materially independent, above the level of the uncultured and poorer elements. The cultural background, which was the precondition of academic recognition, increasingly became a criterion of social distinction. Previously, in the Renaissance, to be sure, individual artists had received unusual honours, but the great majority of artists led a relatively modest albeit assured existence; now every recognized artist is a 'professore del disegno', and a 'cavaliere' is no longer a curiosity

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among artists. But that kind of differentiation is not only apt to destroy the social unity of artists as a corporative body and to split them up into different classes completely alien to one another, but it also leads to the highest of these classes identifying itself with the upper class of the public instead of with the rest of the artist fraternity. The fact that amateurs and laymen are also elected to membership of the art academies creates a solidarity between the cultured circles of the general public and the artists which is without precedent in the history of art. The Florentine aristocracy is strongly represented in the Accademia del Disegno and this new rôle leads to quite a different kind of interest in artistic matters from that connected with previous forms of patronage. The same academicism, therefore, which, on the lower level, separates the artists as a body from non-artistic craftsmanship, on the higher level, bridges the gap between the productive working artist and the cultured layman.

This mingling of the various strata of society is also expressed in the fact that the art critics no longer write merely for artists but also for art-lovers. Borghini, the author of the famous *Riposo*, does so quite explicitly; but the fact that he thinks it necessary to justify himself as one who, though not a member of the craft, nevertheless writes about art, is a symptom that there is still a certain amount of opposition among artists to the invasion of the field of art criticism by the layman. In his *L'Aretino* (1557), Lodovico Dolce already discusses in detail the problem as to whether it behoves a non-artist to play the part of judge in questions of art, and he reaches the conclusion that the cultured layman must be allowed an absolute right to do so, except in purely technical matters. In accordance with this view, there is a definite falling off in the treatment of technical questions in the writings of the more modern theorists, in contrast to the art treatises of the Renaissance. But, since art theory is carried on mainly by non-artists, it is natural that those aspects of art which are not dependent on individual techniques, but are common to all the arts, are given more emphasis and discussed with more care than hitherto.¹⁸⁵ An aesthetic doctrine gradually becomes predominant which not only neglects the importance of the manual element, but conceals what is specific in the

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individual arts and tends towards a general conception of art. Now, this is the best possible proof of how a sociological phenomenon can influence a decision on purely theoretical questions. The promotion of the artists as a body into higher spheres of society and the participation of the upper classes in artistic life leads, though by a roundabout way, to the abolition of the autonomy of artistic techniques and to the rise of the doctrine of the fundamental homogeneity of art. It is true that, in the persons of Federigo Zuccari and Lomazzo, professional artists come to the forefront again in art literature, but the lay element is well on the way to taking possession of art criticism. Art criticism in the narrower sense of the term, that is to say, the discussion of the artistic merit of individual works, which is more or less independent of the technical and philosophical theory of art, a branch of criticism that only achieves importance, however, during the next period in the history of art, is the domain of non-artists from the very outset.

The first comparatively short phase of Florentine mannerism, which in essentials covers the decade from 1520 to 1530, constitutes a reaction against the academicism of the Renaissance. This tendency is not intensified until the entry of the second phase, which reaches its climax around the middle of the century and of which Bronzino and Vasari are the main representatives. Mannerism begins, therefore, with a protest against the art of the Renaissance, and the people of the time are perfectly well aware of the breach that thereby arises in the development of art. What Vasari says about Pontormo already proves that the new direction is felt as a rupture with the past. Vasari remarks that in his frescoes in the Certosa di Val d'Ema, Pontormo imitates Dürer's style and he describes that as a deviation from the classical ideals, which he and his contemporaries, that is to say, the generation of those born between 1500 and 1510, again hold in the highest respect. But Pontormo's turning away from the masters of the Italian Renaissance to Dürer is in fact not merely a question of taste and form, as Vasari thinks, but the artistic expression of the intellectual affinity which links up Pontormo's generation with the German Reformation. With the influx of the Northern

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religious movement, North European art also gains ground in Italy and, above all, the art of that German artist who, of all his fellow-countrymen, comes nearest to Italian taste and, owing to the spread of his engravings, is also the most popular in the South. But it is by no means those aspects of Dürer's style which it shares with Italian art that make it so attractive especially for Pontormo and those who think like him, but rather the spiritual depth and inwardness, in other words, the qualities which they miss most in classical Italian art. The antitheses of 'Gothic' and 'Renaissance', however, which are largely smoothed out in Dürer himself, are still irreconciled and irreconcilable in the outlook of the mannerists.

This antagonism is expressed most strikingly in their treatment of space. Pontormo, Rosso, Beccafumi, exaggerate the spatial effect of their pictures and make the individual groups of figures suddenly press down into and then shoot up out of the depth, but often they nullify space altogether not merely by abolishing its optical uniformity and structural homogeneity, but also by basing the composition on a planimetric pattern and by combining the propensity towards depth with a tendency to keep to the surface. For the Renaissance, as for every stirring, surging, dynamic culture, space is the basic category of the optical view of the world; in mannerism spatiality loses this predominant position without, however, being completely devalued—in contrast to most static and conservative, other-worldly and spiritualistic, periods in the history of art, which usually renounce the representation of space altogether and portray their figures in abstract isolation, without depth and without atmosphere. The painting of realistic, world-affirming and expansive cultures places the figures, to start with, in a coherent spatial context, then gradually makes them the substratum of the space and, finally, dissolves them in space entirely. That is the path leading from Greek classicism through the art of the fourth century B.C. to Hellenism, and from the Renaissance through baroque to naturalism and impressionism. The early Middle Ages are no more interested in space and spatiality than was classical archaism. Spatiality does not become the principle of actual life, the bearer of light and atmosphere, until the end of the Middle

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Ages. But as the development of art approaches the Renaissance, this consciousness of space is transformed into a real obsession with space. Spengler has pointed out that the spatial mode of vision and thought of the Renaissance man—of the 'Faustian man', as he calls him¹⁸⁶—is a basic characteristic of all dynamic cultures. The golden sky and perspective are in fact much more than two different ways of dealing with the background, they are characteristic of two different approaches to reality. The one takes man, the other the world as its starting point; the one stresses the primacy of the figure over the space, the other allows space, as the element of appearance and the substratum of sense experience, to predominate over the substantiality of man and allows the human figure to be absorbed by space. 'Space exists before the body which is brought to a definite place', says Pomponius Gauricus, the best representative of the Renaissance outlook in this particular context.¹⁸⁷ Mannerism is different from these typical approaches in that it tries, on the one hand, to surmount all spatial limitations, but cannot, on the other hand, forgo the expressive effects of spatial depth. The often exaggerated plasticity and the usually excessive mobility of its figures seem to compensate for the unreality of space, which ceases to form a coherent system and becomes a mere sum-total of spatial coefficients. In works such as Pontormo's 'Joseph in Egypt' or Parmigianino's 'Madonna del collo lungo', this contradictory attitude to the problem of space leads to a phantasmagoria, which can very easily appear to be a mere whim, but which, in fact, has its origin in the weakened sense of reality of the age.

With the consolidation of absolutism, mannerism loses much of its artiness in Florence and takes on a predominantly courtly-academic character; on the one hand, the absolute authority of Michelangelo is recognized and, on the other, the binding nature of firm social conventions. Now, for the first time, the dependence of mannerism on classical art becomes stronger than its opposition to it—above all, probably under the influence of the authoritarian spirit, which dominates courtly Florence and also imposes fixed standards on art. The idea of cool, unapproachable grandezza, which the Duchess brings from her Spanish homeland, is most directly realized in the work of Bronzino, who, with the

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crystal-clear correctness of his forms, is the born court painter. But with the ambivalent nature of his relationship to Michelangelo and to the problem of space, above all with the inner contradiction which has been called the spiritual uneasiness behind the armour of a cool bearing,¹⁸⁸ he is, at the same time, the typical mannerist. In the case of Parmigianino, who is dominated by less strict conventions, the 'armour' is thinner and the signs of spiritual unrest more directly apparent. He is more delicate, more nervous, more morbid than Bronzino; he is able to let himself go more than the court painter and courtier in Florence, but he is just as affected and artificial. There now develops throughout Italy a refined court style, a kind of rococo, the subtlety of which is in no way inferior to the French art of the eighteenth century, but which is often richer and more complicated. Now, for the first time, mannerism acquires the universal recognition and international character that the art of the Renaissance never enjoyed. In this style, which now spreads over the whole of Europe, the precious rococo-like virtuosity forms just as important a constituent as the strict canon based on Michelangelo. And however little these two elements have in common intrinsically, the precious element was already present to some extent in Michelangelo himself, especially in such works as the 'Victor' and the Medici tombs.

Michelangelo's real heir is, however, not international, Michelangelesque mannerism, but Tintoretto, who is perhaps not entirely independent of this international style, but is, in essentials, remote from it. Venice has no court of its own and Tintoretto does not work for foreign courts, like Titian; in fact, it is not until towards the end of his life that he is given commissions even by the Republic. In the main, he is employed by the confraternities instead of by the courts and the states. It is difficult to say whether the religious character of his art was conditioned above all by the demands of those from whom he received commissions or whether he looked for his customers from the very outset in circles already closely related to him spiritually; at any rate, he was the only artist in Italy in whom the religious rebirth of the age found just as deep expression as in Michelangelo, though it was of a different kind. He worked for the fraternity

of S. Rocco, of which he had become a member in 1575, on such modest terms that one may assume that, above all, emotional factors determined his undertaking the work. The intellectual and religious direction of his art was, if not conditioned or even produced, in any case, made possible by the circumstance that he was working for people with such a different outlook from those for whom Titian worked, for example. The fraternities, built up on a religious foundation and usually organized according to occupational categories, are particularly characteristic of sixteenth-century Venice; the popularity they enjoy is a symptom of the deepening of religious life, which is more intensive in Contarini's home town than in most other places in Italy. The members are mostly simple folk and that also explains the priority given to the strictly religious element in their artistic pursuits. But the confraternities themselves are well-to-do and can afford to adorn their club-houses with important and ambitious pictures. By working on the decoration of one such club-house, the Scuola S. Rocco, Tintoretto becomes the greatest and most representative painter of the Counter Reformation.¹⁸⁹ His spiritual rebirth takes place about 1560, at the time when the Tridentinum is drawing towards its close and formulating its decrees on artistic matters. The great paintings of the Scuola S. Rocco, which are created in two separate periods, in the years 1565-7 and 1576-87, portray the heroes of the Old Testament, narrate the life of Christ and glorify the sacraments of the Christian religion. In subject-matter they constitute the most comprehensive series of pictures created by Christian art since Giotto's cycle of frescoes in the Cappella dell'Arena, and as far as the spirit inspiring them is concerned, one must go back to the sculptures in Gothic cathedrals to find such an orthodox description of the Christian cosmos. Michelangelo is a pagan wrestling with the mysteries of Christianity, compared with Tintoretto, who is already in sure possession of the secret which his predecessor still had to struggle to unravel. The biblical scenes, the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, are no longer merely human events for him, as they were for most of the artists of the Renaissance, nor are they mere episodes in the tragedy of the Redeemer, as they are for Michelangelo, but they are rather the

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visible manifestation of the mysteries of the Christian faith. In his work, the representations assume a visionary character and although they unite within themselves all the naturalistic achievements of the Renaissance, the main impression is unreal, spiritual, inspired. There seems to be an absolute absence of gap here between the natural and the supernatural, the secular and the sacred. This perfect balance only represents a passing phase, however; the orthodox Christian significance of the works is lost again. The world-picture of Tintoretto's later paintings is often pagan and mythological, at best Old Testament in character, but on no account based on the Christian gospel. What takes place in them is cosmic in its range; it is a primeval drama, in which both the prophets and saints and Christ and God the Father are, as it were, all partners, fellow-actors, not producers of the play. In the painting 'Moses bringing forth water from the rock', the biblical hero not only has to renounce his rôle as the leading character and yield before the miracle of the jet of water, but God himself becomes a moving heavenly body, a whirling wheel of fire in the mechanism of the universe. In the 'Temptation' and the 'Ascension', this macrocosmic drama, which contains far too little historical definition and human reference to be called strictly Christian and biblical, is repeated. In other works, such as the 'Flight into Egypt' and both 'St. Mary Magdalen' and 'St. Mary Aegyptiaca', the scenery is transformed into a visionary mythological landscape, in which the figures disappear almost completely and the background dominates the whole stage.

Greco is Tintoretto's only real successor. Like the art of the great Venetian mannerist, his art also develops in the main independently of the courts. Toledo, where Greco settles after his years of apprenticeship in Italy, is, next to Madrid—the seat of the court—and Sevilla—the main nodal-point of trade and communications—the third most important city in the Spain of the time and the centre of ecclesiastical life.¹⁰⁰ It is no coincidence that the most deeply religious artist since the Middle Ages should choose this city for his home. It is true that he did try to secure an appointment at the court in Madrid,¹⁰¹ but his failure to do so is a sign that even in Spain an antagonism was beginning to develop between courtly and religious culture, and that for an

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artist like Greco the courtly formula of mannerism had become too narrow. His art is in no way a denial of the courtly origin of the style which it employs, but it far outgrows the realm of the courtly. 'The Burial of the Count of Orgaz' is a ceremony in the proper courtly style, but it rises, at the same time, into regions where all purely social and inter-human affairs are left behind. On the one hand, it is a faultless ceremonial picture; on the other, the representation of an earthly-heavenly drama of the deepest, tenderest and most mysterious feeling. This condition of balance is followed in Greco, as in Tintoretto, by a period characterized by deformation, disproportion and exaggeration. In Tintoretto the scene of the pictures broadened out into the infinities of cosmic space, in Greco intellectually inexplicable incongruities arise between the figures which impel us to seek an interpretation beyond the categories of the rational and the natural. In his last works, Greco approaches Michelangelo's dematerialization of reality. In works such as the 'Visitation' and the 'Wedding of Mary', which in his development take the place of the 'Pietà Rondanini', the figures are already wholly dissolved in the light and have become pale, unsubstantial shadows gliding along in an indefinite, unreal, abstract space.

Greco also has no direct successor; he, too, stands alone with his solution of the burning artistic problems of the day. In contrast to the Middle Ages, the uniform style of which comprehended even the most perfect creations of the time, general currency is now obtained only by the average level of achievement. Greco's spiritual style is not even carried on indirectly, as the cosmic world-view of Italian mannerism is in the art of Bruegel. For, in spite of all the differences, the sense of the cosmic is also the predominant element in this artist, although, in complete contrast to Tintoretto, for example, the symbols of totality are often the most trivial things—a mountain, a valley or a wave. In Tintoretto the ordinary vanishes at the breath of the All, whereas in Bruegel the All is immanent in objects of the most everyday experience. What is realized here is a new form of symbolism, one more or less opposed to all previous symbolisms. In medieval art the symbolical significance was all the more forcibly recognized, the more distant the picture was from em-

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pirical reality, the more stylized and stereotyped it was; here, on the other hand, the symbolical power of the picture increases with the ephemeral and peripheral nature of the subject-matter. As a result of the abstract and conventional character of their symbolism, medieval works of art were always open to only one interpretation, whereas the great artistic creations since the age of mannerism are capable of innumerable possible explanations. To be understood, the paintings of Bruegel and the writings of Shakespeare or Cervantes must always be approached from a different angle. Their symbolical naturalism, which marks the beginning of modern art, implies, as the absolute reversal of Homeric homogeneity, the fundamental divorce of purpose and existence, essence and life, God and the world. The world is not significant here, simply because it is in *being*, as it is in Homer, and these artistic representations are not true simply because they are different from normal reality, as was the case in the Middle Ages, but through their incompleteness and their inherent incomprehensibility they point to a more perfect, more complete, more significant reality.

At first sight, Bruegel seems to have little in common with most of the mannerists. There are no 'tours de force', no artistic niceties, no convulsions and contortions, no arbitrary proportions and contradictory conceptions of space in his work. He seems, especially if one concentrates on the peasant pieces of his last period, to be a robust naturalist, who in no way fits into the framework of problematical, intellectually differentiated mannerism. But, in reality, Bruegel's world-view is as divided, his approach to life just as self-conscious and unspontaneous, as that of the rest of the mannerists. Self-conscious not merely in the sense of the reflectiveness common to all post-Renaissance art, but also in the sense that the artist presents not a description of reality in general, but consciously and intentionally presents *his* version, *his* interpretation of reality, and in the sense that all his work could be summed up under the heading 'How I see it'. This is the revolutionary novelty and the eminently modern feature both in the art of Bruegel and in the whole of mannerism. All that is missing in Bruegel is the preciousness of most of the mannerists, but not their piquant individualism, not the

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supreme desire for self-expression. No one will ever forget his first encounter with Bruegel. It often needs some practice before the inexperienced observer comes to appreciate the characteristics of the art of other, especially older masters; he usually begins by mixing up the works of the different artists. But Bruegel's individuality is unforgettable and unmistakable, even for the beginner.

Bruegel's painting is also like the rest of manneristic art in that it makes no popular appeal. That has not been recognized any more than the general stylistic character of his painting has been understood, having usually been considered a healthy, ingenuous, integral naturalism. He was dubbed the 'Peasant Bruegel', and people fell into the error of imagining that an art which portrays the life of simple folk is also intended for simple folk, whereas the truth is, in reality, rather the opposite. It is usually only the conservatively thinking and feeling ranks of society that seek in art for an image of their own way of life, the portrayal of their own social environment. Oppressed and upward-striving classes wish to see the representation of conditions of life which they themselves envisage as an ideal to aim at, but not the kind of conditions they are trying to work themselves out of. Only people who are themselves superior to them feel sentimentally about simple conditions of life. That is so today, and it was no different in the sixteenth century. Just as the working class and the petty bourgeoisie of today want to see the milieu of rich people and not the circumstances of their own constricted lives in the cinema, and just as the working-class dramas of the last century achieved their outstanding successes not in the popular theatres, but in the West End of the big cities, so Bruegel's art was not intended for the peasantry, but for the higher, or at any rate, the urban, levels of society. It has been shown that his peasant pictures had their origin in court culture.¹⁹² The first signs of an interest in country life as a subject for art are to be observed at the courts, and in the calendar pictures of the prayer-books of the Duke of Berri we possess courtly portrayals of rural scenes from as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. Book illuminations of this kind form one source of Bruegel's art; the other has been discerned in those tapestries which were also intended primarily

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for the court and court circles, and in which, alongside the ladies and gentlemen concerned with hunting and dancing and social games, working country folk, woodcutters and vine-growers, are also portrayed.¹⁹³ The effect of these descriptions of the customs of country and natural life was originally by no means emphatically emotional and romantic—that kind of impression first arose in the eighteenth century—but rather comical and grotesque. The life of the simple country and working-class folk was regarded as a curiosity by those circles for whom the illuminated prayer-books and hangings were intended, as something strange and exotic, but in no way humanly touching and moving. The master class found the same kind of pleasure in these representations of the daily life of simple folk as they did in the *fabliaux* in earlier centuries, the only difference being that, from the outset, these also provided entertainment for the lower classes, whereas the enjoyment of the precious miniatures and tapestries was restricted to the highest circles of society. Those interested in Bruegel's pictures will also have belonged to the most well-to-do and the most cultivated classes. After a sojourn in Antwerp, the artist settles in courtly, aristocratic Brussels somewhere around 1562/3. This move coincides with the stylistic change which is an all-important influence on his final manner and with his turning to the subject-matter of the peasant pictures which established his fame.¹⁹⁴

7. THE SECOND DEFEAT OF CHIVALRY

The renaissance of chivalric romanticism, with the new blaze of enthusiasm for the heroic life and the new vogue of the novels of chivalry, a phenomenon which first appears in Italy and Flanders towards the end of the fifteenth century and which reaches its climax in France and Spain in the next century, is essentially a symptom of the incipient predominance of authoritarian forms of government, of the degeneration of middle-class democracy and the gradual assimilation of Western culture to the standards of the courts. Chivalrous ideals and conceptions of

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virtue are the sublimated form in which the new aristocracy, rising from the lower classes, and the princes, tending towards absolutism, disguise their ideology. The Emperor Maximilian is regarded as the 'last knight', but he has many successors who still lay claim to this title, and even Ignatius Loyola calls himself the 'knight of Christ' and organizes his order according to the principles of the moral code of chivalry—though, at the same time, also in the spirit of the new philosophy of political realism. The ideals of knighthood themselves are no longer capable of supporting the new social structure; their incompatibility with the rationalistic pattern of economic and social reality, their out-of-dateness in the world of 'windmills', is all too obvious. After a century of enthusiasm for the knight-errant and of luxuriating in the adventures of the novels of chivalry, chivalry suffers its second defeat. The great poets and dramatists of the century, Shakespeare and Cervantes, are the mouthpiece of their age—they merely proclaim what is everywhere apparent, that chivalry has outlived its day and that its creative force has become a fiction.

Nowhere did the new cult of chivalry reach the same pitch of intensity as in Spain, where in the seven-hundred-year-long struggle against the Arabs the maxims of faith and honour, the interests and prestige of the ruling class, had become fused into an indissoluble unity, and where the wars of conquest against Italy, the victories over France and the exploitation of the treasures of America offered themselves, as it were, automatically as so many pretexts for the heroizing of the military class. But in this country, where the newly revived spirit of chivalry shone most brilliantly, the disillusion, when the dominance of the ideals of knighthood was shown to be fictitious, was also the greatest. In spite of its conquests and its treasures, victorious Spain had to yield before the economic supremacy of the Dutch traders and English pirates; it was not in a position to supply its war-tried heroes; the proud hidalgo became a starveling, if not a rogue and a vagabond: the novels of chivalry proved to be the least suitable preparation imaginable for the tasks which a soldier who had served his time had to tackle in establishing himself in civilian society.

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The biography of Cervantes provides an extremely typical example of what could befall a man living during the transition from romantic chivalry to realism. Without knowing this story it is impossible to appreciate *Don Quixote* sociologically. The author comes from a destitute family belonging to the knightly aristocracy; because of his poverty, he is forced to serve as a common soldier in Philip II's army from his youth up, and to suffer all the hardships of the Italian campaigns. He takes part in the Battle of Lepanto, in which he is severely wounded. On the return home from Italy, he falls into the hands of Algerian pirates, spends five bitter years as a prisoner, until he is released in 1580 after several unsuccessful attempts to escape. At home, he finds his family poverty-stricken and up to the ears in debt. But there is also no suitable employment for himself, the deserving soldier, the hero of Lepanto, the knight taken prisoner by the heathen; he has to be satisfied with the subordinate position of a paltry tax-collector, he has material worries, is imprisoned innocently or for some trivial offence, and has, finally, to experience the collapse of Spain's military power and her defeat at the hands of the English. The tragedy of the individual knight is repeated on a wider scale in the fate of the chivalrous nation par excellence. It becomes more and more clear to him that the blame for both the individual and the national failure lies in the historical anachronism of chivalry, in the untimeliness of irrational romanticism in this thoroughly unromantic age. If Don Quixote attributes the incompatibility of the world and his ideals to the bewitching of reality, and cannot understand the discrepancy between the subjective and objective order of things, that only means that he has slept through the world-historical transformation, and that his world of dreams, therefore, seems to him to be the only real world, whereas reality appears to be a magic world full of evil demons. Cervantes recognizes the absolute lack of tension and polarity in this attitude and, therefore, its complete incurability; he sees its idealism is just as unanswerable from the point of view of reality as external reality must inevitably remain unaffected by it, and that, given this lack of relationship between the hero and his environment, all action is condemned to miss the mark.

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It may well be that Cervantes was not aware of the deeper significance of his idea at the very beginning, and was merely thinking in the first place of writing a parody of the novels of chivalry. But he must soon have recognized that it was not simply the reading-matter of his contemporaries which was to be questioned. The parodying of chivalry was no new thing in his lifetime: Pulci had already made fun of the stories of chivalry and in Bojardo and Ariosto we find the same ridiculing attitude to its charms. In Italy, where knighthood was represented to some extent by middle-class elements, the new chivalry did not take itself quite seriously. It was doubtless here that Cervantes was prepared for his sceptical attitude, here, in the home of liberalism and humanism, and it was to Italian literature that he probably owed the first suggestion for his epoch-making joke. His work was not intended, however, merely to take a rise out of the artificial and mechanical novels of fashion, nor to become merely a criticism of out-of-date chivalry, but also to be an indictment of the world of disenchanted, matter-of-fact reality, in which there was nothing left for an idealist but to dig himself in behind his *idée fixe*. The novelty in Cervantes' work was, therefore, not the ironic treatment of the chivalrous attitude to life, but the relativizing of the two worlds of romantic idealism and realistic rationalism. What was new was the indissoluble dualism of his world-view, the idea of the impossibility of realizing the idea in the world of reality and of reducing reality to the idea.

In his relationship to the problem of chivalry, Cervantes is entirely determined by the ambivalence of the manneristic approach to life. He wavers between the justification of unworldly idealism and of worldly-wise common sense. From that arises his own conflicting attitude to his hero, which ushers in a new age in the history of literature. Before Cervantes there had only been good and bad characters, deliverers and traitors, saints and blasphemers, in literature; here the hero is saint and fool in one and the same person. If a sense of humour is the ability to see two opposite sides of a thing at the same time, then the discovery of this double-sidedness of a character signifies the discovery of humour in the world of literature—of the kind of humour

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that was unknown before the age of mannerism. We possess no analysis of mannerism in literature going beyond the usual exposition of marinism, gongorism and related tendencies; but if one wished to carry out that kind of analysis, one would have to start with Cervantes.¹⁹⁵ Apart from the wavering sense of reality, the effacement of the frontiers between the real and the unreal, one could also best study in his work the other basic features of mannerism: comedy shining through the darkness of tragedy, the presence of the tragic in the comic, as well as the hero's dual nature, making him seem ridiculous in one moment and sublime in the next. The phenomenon of 'conscious self-deception' is also a leading feature of this style: the various allusions made by the author to the fact that the world of his narrative is a fictitious one, the constant transgression of the frontiers dividing the reality immanent in the work and the reality outside the work, the unconcern with which the characters of the novel step out of their proper sphere and walk over into the reader's world, the 'romantic irony' with which reference is made in the second part to the fame of the main characters established by the first part—how, for example, they reach the ducal court, thanks to their literary fame, and the way Sancho Panza says of himself, that he is Don Quixote's 'squire, who is, or should be in the book, Sancho Panza by name, if he was not changed in his cradle, that is, in the press'. The *idée fixe* by which the hero is obsessed is also manneristic, the compulsion which governs his movements, and the marionette-like character which the whole action acquires as a consequence. The grotesque and capricious style of the presentation, the arbitrary, formless and extravagant nature of the structure, is manneristic; the insatiable delight the narrator takes in introducing more and more new episodes, commentaries and excursions; the cinematic jumps in the story, the digressions and 'dissolves'. The mixture of the realistic and imaginative elements in the style, of the naturalism of the details and the unreality of the total conception, the uniting of the characteristics of the idealistic novel of chivalry and the vulgar picaresque novel, the combination of dialogue based on everyday conversation, which Cervantes is the first novelist to use,¹⁹⁶ with the artificial rhythms and affected figures of speech of *conceptism*—all this is

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manneristic. The fact that the world is presented, as it were, in a process of formation and growth, that the story changes its direction, that the author alters the characters in the course of the narrative, that such an important and apparently indispensable figure as Sancho Panza is altogether an afterthought, that the person of Don Quixote gradually becomes so much deeper and so sublimated that Cervantes—as has been asserted¹⁹⁷—ends by not even understanding his hero himself—all this is very typically manneristic. Finally, the lack of uniformity in the execution, the mixture of virtuosity and delicacy with the negligence and crudity, on account of which *Don Quixote* has been called the most careless of all the great literary creations¹⁹⁸—though the assertion is only half true, since there are works by Shakespeare equally deserving this description.

Cervantes and Shakespeare were almost the same age; they died in the same year, though not in the same year of their lives. The points of contact between the world-view and the artistic intentions of the two writers are innumerable, but the agreement between them is nowhere so significant as in reference to chivalry, which they both consider out of date and decadent. Despite this fundamental unanimity, their feelings in regard to the ideals of chivalry are very different, as is only to be expected with such a complex phenomenon. Shakespeare the dramatist takes up a more positive attitude to the idea of chivalry than the novelist Cervantes, but being the citizen of an England which is in a more progressive stage of social development, he rejects knighthood as a class more sharply than does the Spaniard, who, because of his own knightly descent and military career, is not quite so impartial. If only for stylistic reasons, the dramatist does not wish to renounce the social advancement of his heroes: they must be princes, generals and great lords, in order to stand out against their fellow creatures on the stage, and they must fall from a sufficient height, to make a correspondingly deep impression with their sudden change of fortune.

Under the Tudors, kingship had developed into despotism. The nobility had been almost completely destroyed at the end of the Wars of the Roses, but the gentry, the yeomanry and the urban middle class wanted peace and order above all things—

they did not mind what government they had so long as it was strong enough to prevent the return of anarchy. Immediately before Elizabeth's accession to the throne the country was again afflicted with the horrors of civil war; religious antagonisms seemed to have become more irreconcilable than ever before, the national budget was in a hopeless state, foreign affairs were confused and by no means without danger. The very fact that the Queen succeeded in partly removing, partly evading these dangers assured her of a certain measure of popularity in many sections of the population. For the privileged and possessing classes her reign meant, above all, that they were protected against the threatening danger of revolutionary movements rising from below. All the fears entertained by the middle classes about the increase in the powers of the sovereign were silenced by the support they had in the monarchy in waging the class war. Elizabeth promoted the capitalist economy in every way; like most of the rulers of her age, she was constantly finding herself in financial difficulties, and she even took a direct part in the undertakings of Drake and Raleigh. Private enterprise had the benefit of hitherto unheard-of protection; not only the government but legislation, too, was concentrated on looking after its interests.¹⁹⁹ The acquisitive economy rose uninterruptedly and the spirit of profit-making connected with it embraced the whole nation. Everybody who was economically mobile indulged in speculation. The rich bourgeoisie and the landowning or industrially active nobility formed the new ruling class. The stabilization of society is expressed in the alliance between the Crown and this new class. One must not over-estimate, however, the political and intellectual influence of these social strata. The court, at which the old aristocracy still sets the fashion, forms the centre of public life and the Crown favours the court nobility as against the middle class and the gentry, wherever it can do so without harm and danger. On the other hand, the court is already made up partly of people first raised to the peerage under the Tudors and enabled by their wealth to rise in society. The very few descendants of the old nobility and the members of the squirearchy are quite willing to marry into and co-operate economically with the rich and conservative section of the middle

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class. The social levelling ensues here, as in almost the whole of Europe, partly through the children of middle-class people marrying into the aristocracy, partly through the placing of the younger sons of the nobility in bourgeois professions. In England, however, where the second case is the rule, what takes place is essentially the levelling down of the nobility to the middle class; in contrast, above all, to France, where the rise of the middle class into the nobility is the characteristic phenomenon. In England, the fact that the monarchy had restored order after century-long feuds and was now ready to guarantee the security of the propertied classes remained the decisive factor governing the relationship of the upper middle class and the squirearchy to the Crown. The principle of order, the idea of authority and security, becomes the basis of the middle-class outlook on life, since the acquisitive classes become more and more conscious of the fact that there is nothing so dangerous for them as a weak government and the undermining of the social hierarchy. 'When degree is shaken . . . the enterprise is sick' (*Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3)—that is the quintessence of their social philosophy. Their fear of chaos explains Shakespeare's royalism as well as that of his contemporaries. The thought of anarchy pursues them everywhere; the order of the universe, and the dissolution with which this order seems to them to be menaced, is a leading theme of their thinking and writing.²⁰⁰ They invest the picture of social disorder with the dimensions of the troubled harmony of the universe, and they interpret the music of the spheres as the song of victory of the angels of peace in their triumph over the elements of revolt.

Shakespeare sees the world through the eyes of a well-to-do, on the whole liberally-minded, sceptical and in some respects disillusioned townsman. He expresses political views which are rooted in the idea of human rights—as we should call it today—he condemns the encroachments of power and the oppression of the common people, but he also condemns what he calls the arrogance and prepotence of the mob, and, in his bourgeois uneasiness and fear of anarchy, he sets the principle of 'order' above all humanitarian considerations. Conservative critics usually agree that Shakespeare despises the common people and hates the

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'rabble' of the streets, whereas some socialists, who would like to claim him as one of their own, think that there can be no question of hatred and contempt in him in this connection, and that one is not entitled to expect of a poet of the sixteenth century that he should have taken his stand on the side of the proletariat as we understand it today, all the less as that kind of proletariat was non-existent at the time.²⁰¹ The arguments of Tolstoy and Shaw, who identify Shakespeare's political views with those of his aristocratic heroes, above all with the views of Coriolanus, are not particularly convincing, even though it is remarkable with how much obvious delight Shakespeare allows the common people to be insulted—in saying which one must not forget, however, with how much gusto insults were bandied about for their own sake on the Elizabethan stage. Shakespeare certainly does not approve of Coriolanus' prejudices, but the regrettable delusions of the aristocrat do not spoil his delight in the sight of the 'fine fellow'. He looks down on the broad masses of the people with a feeling of superiority in which—as Coleridge already remarked—there is a mixture of disdain and patient benevolence. On the whole, his approach corresponds to the attitude of the humanists, whose catchwords referring to the 'uncultured', 'politically immature', 'fickle' crowd he guilelessly repeats. But as soon as one remembers that the English aristocracy, which is more closely connected with humanism, approaches the common people with more understanding and goodwill than the middle class, which is more directly menaced by the economic aspirations of the proletariat, and that, for example, Beaumont and Fletcher, who stand closer to the aristocracy than any of Shakespeare's professional colleagues, show the common people in a more favourable light than most of the dramatists of the period,²⁰² it will immediately become obvious that these reservations are not merely cultural in origin. But however high or low Shakespeare assessed the intellectual and moral qualities of the masses, however much or little personal sympathy he showed for the 'evil-smelling' and 'honest' common people, it would be an all too far-reaching simplification of the facts to represent him simply as a tool in the hands of reaction. Marx and Engels diagnosed the decisive factor here just as

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correctly as in the case of Balzac. Both writers were, despite their fundamentally conservative approach, pioneers of progress, for both had recognized the critical and indefensible nature of the situation in which most of their contemporaries were content to acquiesce. Whatever Shakespeare thought about the monarchy, the middle class and the common people, the mere fact that he expressed a tragic view of life and the deepest pessimism, in an age of national ascent and economic prosperity from which he himself profited so much, is evidence of his sense of social responsibility and his conviction that not everything in this demi-Paradise was for the best. He was certainly no revolutionary and no fighter by nature, but he was on the same side as those who prevented the revival of the feudal nobility by their healthy rationalism, just as Balzac involuntarily and unconsciously became one of the forerunners of modern socialism through his unmasking of middle-class psychology.

Shakespeare's historical dramas make it sufficiently clear that in the struggle between the Crown, the middle class and the gentry, on the one side, and the feudal aristocracy, on the other, the dramatist by no means stood on the side of the cruel and arrogant rebels. His interests and inclinations bound him to the social strata which embraced the middle class and the liberally-minded aristocracy that had adopted the middle-class outlook, and which formed a progressive group, at any rate, in contrast to the old feudal nobility. Antonio and Timon, the rich, cultured, generous merchants with cultivated manners and seignorial bearing, probably came nearest to his ideal. In spite of his sympathies for the ruling-class attitude to life, Shakespeare always stood on the side of healthy common sense, justice and spontaneous feeling, wherever these middle-class virtues came into conflict with the obscure motives of an irrational knightly romanticism, of superstition and a turbid mysticism. Cordelia is the purest embodiment of these virtues in the midst of her feudal milieu.²⁰³ For however highly Shakespeare the dramatist places the decorative value of chivalry, he cannot reconcile himself to the unrestrained hedonism, the thoughtless hero-cult, the wild, unruly individualism of this class. Sir John Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek are shameless parasites; Achilles,

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Ajax, Hotspur, idle, swaggering bullies; the Percys, Glendowers, Mortimers, ruthless egoists—and Lear is a feudal despot in a state where heroic-knightly moral principles reign supreme and where nothing gentle, affectionate and unassuming has a chance of survival.

It has been thought possible completely to reconstruct Shakespeare's conception of chivalry from the portrayal of Falstaff's character. But Falstaff represents only one type of Shakespearian knight, namely the knight who has been uprooted by economic developments and corrupted by his adoption of the middle-class outlook, who has become an opportunist and a cynic and would still like to appear as a selfless and heroic idealist. He combines within himself features from the character of Don Quixote with some of Sancho Panza's qualities, but, in contrast to Cervantes' hero, is only a caricature. Characters like Brutus, Hamlet, Timon and, above all, Troilus represent the Don Quixote type more purely.²⁰⁴ Their other-worldly idealism, their naïvety and credulity are all qualities which they have in common with Don Quixote; the only peculiar characteristic of the Shakespearian vision is their terrible awakening from delusion and the untold misery which follows from their belated recognition of the truth.

Shakespeare's attitude to chivalry is very involved and not entirely consistent either. He transforms the decline of knight-hood, which he still describes with complete satisfaction in his historical plays, into the tragedy of idealism—not because he had come any nearer the ideal of chivalry, but because he had also become estranged from 'unchivalrous' reality and its Machiavellism. It had now become apparent where the rule of this doctrine had led! Marlowe was still fascinated by Machiavelli, and the young Shakespeare, the author of the chronicle of *Richard III*, was obviously also more enthusiastic about him than the later Shakespeare, for whom, as for his contemporaries, Machiavellism had become a nightmare. It is impossible to describe Shakespeare's attitude to the social and political problems of his age uniformly, regardless of the various stages in his development. Especially around the turn of the century, at the time of his full maturity and at the height of his success, his philosophy underwent a change, which fundamentally altered

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his whole judgement of the social situation and his feelings towards the different sections of society. His earlier contentment with existing conditions and his optimism regarding the future were undermined and even though he held fast to the principle of order, the appreciation of social stability and the rejection of the heroic ideal of feudal chivalry, he seems to have lost his confidence in Machiavellian absolutism and a ruthlessly acquisitive economy. Shakespeare's turning to pessimism has been connected with the tragedy of the Earl of Essex, in which the poet's patron, Southampton, was also involved, and reference has also been made to other unpleasant events in the history of the time, such as the enmity between Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, the persecution of the Puritans, the gradual transformation of England into a police state, the end of the comparatively liberal government of Elizabeth and the new feudalistic tendency under James I, the climax in the conflict between the monarchy and the puritanically-minded middle class, as possible causes of this change.²⁰⁵ However that may be, the crisis through which he passes undermines his whole balance and produces a moral philosophy of which nothing is so characteristic as the fact that, from now on, the poet feels more sympathy for people who are failures in public life than for those who have good fortune and success. He has a particularly warm spot in his heart for Brutus, the political bungler and unlucky fellow.²⁰⁶ Such a revaluation can hardly be explained by a mere change of mood, by some completely private experience or purely intellectual rectification of previous views. Shakespeare's pessimism has a superindividual significance and bears the marks of a historical tragedy.

Shakespeare's relation to the theatre public of his age corresponds to his social outlook in general; but the changes in his sympathies can be followed better in this concrete context than in general abstractions. We can divide his literary career into several easily distinguishable phases, according to the social strata to which he devotes special attention and the concessions which he makes to them. The author of the poems 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' is still a poet who conforms to fashionable humanistic taste and writes for aristocratic court circles, who chooses the

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epic form to establish his fame, obviously because, in accordance with the courtly conception, he sees in the drama a genre of the second rank. The lyric and the epic are now the favourite literary forms in cultured court circles, beside which the drama, with its wider public appeal, is regarded as a comparatively plebeian form of expression. After the end of the Wars of the Roses, when the English aristocracy follow the example of their Italian and French compeers and begin to take an interest in literature, the court becomes, as in other countries, the centre of literary life. English Renaissance literature is courtly and dilettante, in contrast to medieval literature, which was only partly courtly and was carried on in the main by professional writers. Wyatt, Surrey and Sidney are cultured amateurs, but most of the professional authors of the age are also subject to the influence of the cultivated aristocrats. As for the origin of these *littérateurs*, we know that Marlowe was the son of a shoemaker, Peele of a silversmith and Dekker of a tailor, and that Ben Jonson first takes up his father's occupation and becomes a mason; but only a relatively small proportion of the writers come from the lower strata of society, the majority spring from the gentry, the official and the rich merchant class.²⁰⁷ No literature could possibly be more class-determined in its origins and direction than the Elizabethan, the chief aim of which consists in the training of real noblemen, and which appeals, above all, to the circles directly interested in the achievement of this aim. It has been thought curious that at a time when the old aristocracy had very largely died out and the new had, until very recently, still been part of the middle class, so much importance should have been attached to noble descent and bearing;²⁰⁸ but it is well known that it is precisely the fact that the members of an aristocracy are upstarts that often explains their snobbishness and the exaggerated claims which they make on their own compeers. Literary culture is one of the most important acquirements expected of a man of gentle birth in the Elizabethan age. Literature is now the great vogue and it is good form to talk about poetry and discuss literary problems. The affected style of the fashionable poetry is transferred to ordinary conversation; even the Queen speaks in this artificial style, and not to speak in it is

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considered just as much a mark of ill-breeding as the inability to speak French.²⁰⁹ Literature becomes a party game. In polite society epic and, above all, lyric poems, countless sonnets and songs by cultured dilettanti pass from hand to hand in manuscript; they are not printed, in order to stress the fact that the author is not a professional writer offering his works for sale and that he wishes to restrict their circulation from the very outset.

In these circles of society, even among professional writers, a lyric or epic poet is esteemed more highly than a dramatist; he finds a patron more easily and can count upon more generous support. And yet the material existence of a dramatist, writing for the public theatres which are so popular with all classes of society, is more secure than that of the writers dependent on a private patron. It is true that the plays are badly paid for in themselves—Shakespeare acquires his fortune not as a dramatist but as a theatre shareholder—the constant demand guarantees, nevertheless, a regular income. Thus almost all the writers of the age work for the stage at least for a time; they all try their luck in the theatre, though often with a bad conscience—which is all the more remarkable as the Elizabethan theatre originates partly in the courtly or quasi-courtly life of the great houses. The actors who travel around the country and those resident in London derive directly from the clowns and jesters hitherto employed in these houses. At the end of the Middle Ages, the great seignorial households had their own actors—either in permanent or occasional employ—just as they had their own minstrels; originally they were probably identical. On festive occasions, above all at Christmas and at family festivities, especially weddings, they performed plays usually written for the occasion. They wore livery and the badge of their masters just like the other attendants and servants. The outward form of this service relationship was maintained even when the minstrels and house mimes had formed themselves into independent companies of actors. The patronage of their former masters offered them protection against the animosity of the city authorities and guaranteed them an additional income. Their protector paid them a small annual fee and an extra sum for their services whenever he wanted to arrange a theatrical performance for a family occasion.²¹⁰ These

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domestic and court players, therefore, form the direct link between the minstrels and mimes of the Middle Ages and the professional actors of the modern age. The old families gradually die out, the great households are broken up—the players have to stand on their own feet; but it is the rapid development of London and the centralization of court and cultural life under the Tudors which supplies the decisive incentive for the formation of regular theatrical companies.²¹¹

In the Elizabethan age a wild chase after patrons already begins. The dedication of a book and the payment for the honour becomes an occasional deal in which not the slightest attachment between author and patron or any real esteem is assumed. Authors outbid each other in the thickly laid on flattery of the dedications, which they address often to complete strangers; meanwhile the patrons themselves become more and more niggardly and unreliable with their gifts. The old patriarchal relationship between patron and protégé is in process of dissolution.²¹² Shakespeare also seizes the opportunity of transferring his talents to the theatre. It is difficult to say whether he does so first of all because of the greater security it offers, or because the respect in which the theatre is held has grown meanwhile, and because his interests and sympathies had shifted from the narrow circle of aristocrats to the broader masses—probably all these factors combined in making up his mind. This change to the theatre marks the beginning of the second phase in Shakespeare's artistic development. The works which he now writes no longer have the classicizing and affectedly idyllic note of his first productions, but they still conform to the taste of the upper classes. They are partly proud chronicles, great historical and political plays, in which the idea of monarchy is extolled, partly light-hearted, exuberantly romantic comedies, which move, full of optimism and joy of life, unconcerned about the cares of every day, in a completely fictitious world. Around the turn of the century the third and tragic period in Shakespeare's development begins. The poet has now left the euphuism and playful romanticism of the upper strata of society far behind; but he also seems to have become estranged from the middle classes. He writes his tragedies for the great mixed public of the London theatres without regard

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to a particular class. There is no longer a trace of the old light-heartedness; even the so-called comedies of this period are full of melancholy. Then follows the last phase in the poet's development: a time of resignation and soothing calm—with tragi-comedies which stray once more into the romantic mood. Shakespeare leaves the middle class, which becomes more short-sighted and narrow-minded in its puritanism from day to day, further and further behind him. The attacks of the civic and ecclesiastical authorities on the theatre increase in violence; the actors and dramatists have once again their patrons and protectors in the circles of the court and the nobility and adapt themselves more to their taste. The tendency represented by Beaumont and Fletcher is victorious; Shakespeare himself also follows it to some extent. He again writes plays in which the romantic-fabulous elements are predominant and which are, in many respects, reminiscent of the shows and masques of the court. Five years before his death, at the height of his development, Shakespeare retires from the theatre and stops writing plays altogether. Was the most sublime dramatic work that it was granted to a poet to create the gift of destiny to a man who wanted, first of all, to supply his theatrical undertaking with saleable goods, and who ceased to produce when he had secured a carefree livelihood for himself and his family, or was it rather the creation of a poet who gave up writing when he felt there was no longer any public left for whom it was worth his while to write?

No matter how one answers this question, and whether one thinks of Shakespeare as leaving the theatre saturated or disgusted, so much is certain, that during most of his theatrical career he stood in a very positive relationship to his public, even though he favoured different sections of it in the various phases of his development and finished by not being able to identify himself completely with any particular one. In any case, Shakespeare was the first, if not the only great poet in the history of the theatre, to appeal to and meet with the full approval of a broad and mixed public embracing almost all levels of society. Greek tragedy was too complex a phenomenon, public interest in it was made up of too many different factors, for us to be able to assess its intrinsic aesthetic influence; religious and political

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motives played a part of no less importance in its public reception than artistic motives; owing to the fact that admission was restricted to full citizens, its public was more homogeneous than that of the Elizabethan theatre; moreover, its performances took place in the form of comparatively rare festivals, so that its power of attracting the broad masses was never really put to the test. Again, the medieval drama, the performance of which took place under external conditions similar to the Elizabethan, had no really important works to show; its popularity with the masses, therefore, does not represent a problem of the sociology of art in the way that the Shakespearian drama does. In the case of Shakespeare, however, the real problem does not consist in the fact that he, the greatest writer of his age, was also its most popular dramatist, and that the plays which we like most were also the most successful with his contemporaries,²¹³ but that, this time, the judgement of the broad masses of the public was more correct than that of the cultured classes and the connoisseurs. Shakespeare's literary fame reached its height about 1598 and diminished precisely from the moment when he reached his full maturity; but the theatre public remained loyal to him and strengthened the unrivalled position which he had already achieved in earlier days.

In contradiction of the assumption that Shakespeare's theatre was a mass theatre in the modern sense, reference has been made to the relatively small capacity of the playhouses of the time.²¹⁴ But the smallness of the theatres, which was made up for by daily performances, does not alter the fact that their audiences consisted of the most varied strata of the London population. Those who frequented the pit were by no means the absolute masters of the theatre, but they were there and could not be overlooked under any circumstances. In addition, they were there in comparatively large numbers. Although the upper classes were represented more generously than was appropriate to their numerical share in the total population, the working classes, who formed the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the city, made up the majority of the audience, despite the fact that proportionately they were less well represented. The prices of admission, which conformed chiefly to the financial capacity of

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these people, also allow us to form that conclusion.²¹⁵ The audience which confronted Shakespeare was, at any rate, a motley one, both economically and also from a class and educational point of view; it brought together the tavern public, representatives of the cultured upper class and members of the middle classes who were neither particularly cultured nor absolutely uncivilized. And even if it was by no means any longer the public of the travelling miming stages, which filled the playhouses of Elizabethan London, it was still the public of a people's theatre in the comprehensive sense in which the term was understood by the romantics. Was the coincidence of quality and popularity in the Shakespearian drama based on a pregnant inner relationship or a mere misunderstanding? In Shakespeare's plays the public seems, at any rate, to have found pleasure not merely in the violent stage effects, the wild bloody action, the coarse jokes and loud tirades, but also the more tender and deeper poetic details, otherwise these passages would not have been allowed to occupy as much space as they do. It is possible, of course, that the pit only took in the mere sound and general mood of such passages, as may well happen with a simple public that loves the theatre. But these are idle, insoluble problems. There is not much more point in the question whether Shakespeare made use of the effects, which he apparently only employed to please the less exacting section of his public, with a good artistic conscience or against his will. The cultural differences between the various strata of the public will not have been anything like so great as to make it admissible for us to assume a preference for fisticuffs and smutty jokes only in the less educated part of the audience. Shakespeare's outbursts against the pit are misleading; there was no doubt some affectation mixed up with them, and the desire to flatter the more refined section of the audience may also have played a part.²¹⁶ The difference between the 'public' and the 'private' theatres also does not seem to have been so great as has been assumed hitherto; *Hamlet* was equally successful in both, and the audience of both types was absolutely indifferent to the rules of classical drama.²¹⁷ But even in Shakespeare himself one must not make such a sharp distinction between what we understand by artistic conscience and the preconditions of his theatre,

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as has often happened in earlier Shakespeare criticism.²¹⁸ Shakespeare does not write his plays because he wants to hold fast an experience or solve a problem; he does not find a theme first and then look for a suitable form and possibility of performing it in public, but first comes the demand and then he tries to meet it. He writes his plays because his theatre needs them. But in spite of Shakespeare's deep connection with the living theatre, one must not exaggerate the doctrine of the value of his plays as 'good theatre'. It is quite true that his plays were intended, first of all, for a folk theatre, but he was writing in an age of humanism in which a great deal was also read. It has been remarked that, with the usual playing time of two and a half hours, most of Shakespeare's plays were much too long to be performed without cuts. (Were the poetically most valuable passages cut in the theatrical performances?) The obvious explanation of the length of these plays is that when he was writing them the poet was not thinking merely of the stage but also of their publication in book form.²¹⁹ Both conceptions, the one that attributes Shakespeare's whole greatness to the fact that the plays were written by a craftsman for immediate stage requirements and to the fact that his art has a popular basis, as well as the other conception according to which everything common, in bad taste and careless in his plays is a concession to the broad masses of the public, are equally romantic.

Shakespeare's greatness can no more be explained sociologically than can artistic quality in general. But the fact that in Shakespeare's time there was in existence a folk theatre, which embraced the most varied sections of society, and which united them in the enjoyment of the same works, must be capable of explanation. Like most of the dramatists of his time, Shakespeare is absolutely indifferent to religious problems. There can be no question of his public having been possessed of a sense of social community. The consciousness of national unity was only just beginning to arise and was not yet having any effect on cultural life. The uniting of the various strata of society in the theatre was made possible only by the dynamic quality of social life, which keeps the boundaries between the classes in a state of flux, and which, even though it by no means obliterates the objective

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differences, allows the subject to move from one category into another. The individual social categories are less sharply divided from one another in Elizabethan England than anywhere else in Western Europe; above all, cultural differences are smaller here than, for example, in the Italy of the Renaissance, where humanism drew more decisive lines of demarcation between the various sections of society than in the England of the Elizabethan age, which had a similar economic and social structure, but was a 'younger' country. In Italy, therefore, no cultural institution with a universality comparable to that of the English theatre could possibly hope to thrive. This theatre is the result of a levelling of minds, unheard of outside England. And in this connection the often exaggerated analogy between the Elizabethan stage and the cinema is really instructive. People go to the cinema to see a film; educated or uneducated, they all know what to expect. With a stage play, on the other hand, this is by no means the case today. But in the Elizabethan age people went to the theatre as we go to the cinema, and agreed in the main in their expectations concerning the performance, however different their intellectual needs were in other respects. The common criterion of the entertaining and the moving, which was current in the various strata of society, made Shakespeare's art possible, though it in no sense created it, and it conditioned its particularity though not its quality.

Not only the content and tendency, but also the form of Shakespearian drama is determined by the political and social structure of the period. It springs from the basic experience of political realism, namely the experience that the pure, unadulterated, uncompromising idea cannot be realized here on earth, and that either the purity of the idea must be sacrificed to reality or reality must remain unaffected by the idea. This was, of course, not the first time the dualism of the world of ideas and the world of phenomena had been discovered, since it was known both to the Middle Ages and to classical antiquity. This antagonism is, however, quite foreign to the Homeric epic, and even Greek tragedy does not yet really deal with the conflict of these two worlds. It rather describes the situation in which mortals are plunged through the interference of the divine powers. The

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tragic complication does not arise here, because the hero feels a yearning for a truer life, and it does not, by any means, lead to his approaching the world of ideas, to his being more deeply penetrated by the idea. Even in Plato, who not only knows of the antagonism between idea and reality but makes it the basic principle of his system, the two spheres did not come into contact with each other. The aristocratically-minded idealist persists in a passively contemplative attitude to reality and moves the idea into an unapproachable, immeasurable remoteness. The Middle Ages felt the contrast between this world and the next, between physical and spiritual life, and between the unfulfilment and the perfection of being more deeply than any previous or later age, but the awareness of this contrast does not produce a tragic conflict in medieval man. The saint renounces the world; he does not seek to realize the divine in the earthly, but to prepare himself for a life in God. According to the doctrine of the Church, it is not the world's task to rise to transcendent reality, but to be the footstool under the feet of God. For the Middle Ages only different distances from God are possible, but not conflict with Him. A moral standpoint, which would attempt to justify antagonism to the divine idea and create recognition for the voice of the world against the voice of heaven, would be perfectly nonsensical from the point of view of medieval philosophy. These factors explain why the Middle Ages has no tragedy and why Greek tragedy is fundamentally different from what we understand by a drama with a tragic solution. The form of tragic drama corresponding to our conception is first discovered by the age of political realism, which shifts the dramatic conflict from the action itself to the soul of the hero; for only an age which is able to understand the problems involved in action based on direct reality can ascribe a moral value to an attitude, which takes into account the exigencies of the world though it is inimical to ideas.

The late medieval moralities form the transition from the non-tragic and non-dramatic mysteries of the Middle Ages to the tragedies of the modern age. They are the first expression of the spiritual conflict which is worked up in the Elizabethan drama into a tragic conflict of conscience.²²⁰ The motifs which Shakespeare and his contemporaries add to the description of this

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spiritual struggle consist in the inevitability of the conflict, its ultimate insolubility and the moral victory of the hero in the midst of disaster. This victory is first made possible by the modern conception of destiny, which differs from the classical idea, above all, in the fact that the tragic hero affirms his fate and accepts it as intrinsically significant. A fate becomes tragic in the modern sense only through being accepted. The intellectual affinity of this idea of tragedy with the Protestant idea of predestination is unmistakable; and even if there is perhaps no direct dependence, at any rate, it is a case of parallelism in the history of ideas, which invests with real significance the simultaneity of the Reformation and the origins of modern tragedy.

In the age of the Renaissance and mannerism, there are three more or less independent forms of the theatre in the civilized nations of Europe: (1) the religious play, which comes to an end everywhere except in Spain; (2) the learned drama, which spreads everywhere with humanism but nowhere becomes popular; and (3) the folk theatre, which creates a number of different forms, moving between the *commedia dell'arte* and the Shakespearian drama with varying degrees of approximation to literature, but never entirely losing its connection with the medieval theatre. The humanist drama introduced three important innovations: it transformed the medieval play, which consisted in the main in pageantry and pantomime, into a work of literary art, it isolated the stage from the auditorium in order to increase the effect of illusion, and, finally, it concentrated the action spatially and temporally; in other words, it replaced the epic extravagance of the Middle Ages by the dramatic concentration of the Renaissance.²²¹ Of these innovations Shakespeare adopts only the first, but, to a certain extent, he preserves both the medieval lack of division between the stage and the auditorium and also the epic breadth of the religious drama as well as the mobility of the action. In this respect he is less progressive than the authors of the humanist drama, and for that reason also he has no real successors in modern dramatic literature. Both the *tragédie classique*, the bourgeois drama of the eighteenth century and the drama of German classicism, as well as the naturalistic theatre of the nineteenth century from Scribe and Dumas *fils* to Ibsen and

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Shaw, are, from a formal point of view, at any rate, closer to the humanist drama than to the Shakespearian type of loosely constructed play with its comparatively modest scenic illusionism. Shakespearian form is not really adopted again until the advent of the film. Here too, of course, only a part of the principles of this form is retained; above all the cumulative style of composition, the discontinuity of the action, the abrupt changes of scene, the free and highly varied treatment of space and time—but in the film there can be no more or even less question than in the modern drama of a waiving of scenic illusionism. The popular medieval tradition in the theatre, which was still alive in Shakespeare and his contemporaries, was destroyed by humanism, mannerism and the baroque—in later dramatists it survives at best as a mere memory; there is obviously no intellectual continuity between Shakespeare and the aspects of the film which are reminiscent of this tradition. They are due to the possibilities offered by a technique that is in a position to solve the difficulties which were naïvely and crudely disregarded by the Shakespearian theatre.

From the stylistic point of view, the most peculiar characteristic of Shakespeare's theatre is the combination of the popular tradition with an avoidance of the tendency which leads to the 'domestic drama'. In contrast to most of his contemporaries, he does not use middle-class figures from everyday life as leading characters, nor does he introduce their peculiar sentimentality and inclination to moralize. Even in Marlowe we meet main characters, like Barnabas the usurer and Faustus the doctor, who could have been, at the most, subsidiary characters in the humanist drama. Shakespeare, whose heroes, even when they belong to the middle class, display an aristocratic attitude, marks a certain retrogression sociologically, even compared with Marlowe. But amongst Shakespeare's younger contemporaries there are already dramatists, such as Thomas Heywood and Thomas Dekker, who often give their plays an entirely middle-class setting and express the outlook of the middle class. They choose merchants and craftsmen as their heroes, portray family life and family manners, seek after melodramatic effects and the extraction of a moral, love sensational themes and grossly realistic milieus, such as

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madhouses, brothels, etc. The classical example of the 'bourgeois' treatment of a love tragedy of this period is Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, a play of which the hero is a nobleman, but one who reacts to the ruin of his marriage in an extremely unheroic and unchivalrous manner. It is a problem play, which revolves around the apparently burning issue of adultery, just as Ford's *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore* revolves around the popular theme of incest or Middleton's *The Changeling* around the psychology of sin. In all these plays, to which the anonymous sensational drama *Arden of Feversham* must also be added, the 'middle-class' element is the interest in crime, which, to the bourgeois who clings to the principle of order and discipline, means sheer chaos. In Shakespeare violence and sin never have this criminal touch; his evil-doers are natural phenomena, who would find it impossible to breathe in the indoors atmosphere of the middle-class dramas of Heywood, Dekker, Middleton and Ford. And yet the basic character of Shakespeare's art is thoroughly naturalistic. Not only in the sense that he neglects the unities, the economy and order of classical art, but also that he labours at the constant expansion and elaboration of his material. Above all, his character-drawing is naturalistic, the differentiated psychology of his figures and the human lifelikeness of his heroes, who are a bundle of contradictions and full of weaknesses. One need only think of Lear, who is a stupid old man; of Othello, a big childish boy; Coriolanus, an obstinate, ambitious schoolboy; Hamlet, a weakling, short-winded and fat; Caesar, epileptic, deaf in one ear, superstitious, vain, inconsistent, easily influenced and, nevertheless, possessed of a greatness from whose impact it is impossible to escape. Shakespeare intensifies the naturalism of his character-drawing by his 'petits faits vrais', as when Prince Henry asks for beer after his fight, or Coriolanus wipes the sweat from his brow, or Troilus warns Cressida of the cold morning air after the first night of love: 'You will catch cold and curse me.'

But the limitations of Shakespeare's naturalism are only too evident. He is always mixing up individual with conventional characteristics, the complex with the simple and naïve, the most subtle with the primitive and the crude. He deliberately and systematically takes over some of the methods which he finds

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ready to hand, but more often than not quite uncritically and thoughtlessly. The worst error of the older Shakespeare criticism consisted in regarding all the poet's means of expression as well-considered, carefully pondered, artistically conditioned solutions and, above all, in trying to explain all the qualities of his characters on the basis of inner psychological motives, whereas, in reality, they have remained very much as Shakespeare found them in his sources, or were chosen only because they represented the most simple, convenient and quickest solution of a difficulty, to which the dramatist did not find it worth his while to devote any further trouble.²²² The most striking expression of Shakespeare's conventionalism is to be found in the repeated use of stock types from older plays. It is not merely the early comedies which retain the stereotyped figures of classical comedy and mime, even such an apparently original and complicated character as Hamlet is a regular type, namely the 'melancholist', who was the fashion in Shakespeare's day, and whom we meet all over the place in contemporary literature. But Shakespeare's psychological naturalism is also limited in other directions. The lack of uniformity and consistency in the character-drawing, the unmotivated changes and contradictions in the development of his characters, their self-descriptions and self-explanations in monologues and asides, the lack of perspective in their statements about themselves and their opponents, their comments, which have always to be taken literally, the great amount of irrelevant talking which has no connection with the character of the speaker, the inattentiveness of the poet, who sometimes forgets who is really speaking, whether it is Gloster or Lear, indeed whether it is Timon or Lear, who often makes his characters speak lines which have a purely lyrical, atmospherical and musical function, and who often speaks through the mouth of his characters—all these are offences against the rules of that psychology of which Shakespeare is, in fact, the first great master. His psychological wisdom and depth remain unaffected, however, by the carelessness which is allowed to creep in. His characters have—and this is a quality which he shares again with Balzac—such irresistible inner truth, such inexhaustible substantiality, that they do not cease to live and breathe, however much they are violated and

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however badly they are drawn. But there is hardly any transgression against psychological truth committed by the other Elizabethan dramatists from which Shakespeare can be absolved; he is incomparably greater, yet of the selfsame stock. His greatness also has nothing of the 'perfection', nothing of the 'flawlessness' of the classics. He lacks their absolute authority, but he also lacks their simplicity, their monotony. The particularity of Shakespeare as a phenomenon and the antagonism of his dramatic style to classical and normative forms has been felt and emphasized at all times. Voltaire and even Jonson recognized that a wild, natural force was at work here, which was neither concerned about the 'rules' nor capable of being controlled by them, and which found expression in a dramatic form utterly different from that of classical tragedy. Anyone with a sense of stylistic variations could see that it was a question of two different types of the same genre; but it was not always recognized that the difference was historical and sociological. The sociological difference only becomes apparent when one tries to explain why the one type succeeds in England, the other in France, and what the constitution of the public may have had to do with the victory of the Shakespearian form of drama here and that of the *tragédie classique* there.

The appreciation of Shakespeare's individuality was made more difficult especially by the fact that people persisted in regarding him as the supreme poet of the English Renaissance. Certain Renaissance-like—individualistic and humanistic—characteristics are doubtless present in his art, and since it was the ambition of every national literary historian in Western Europe in the last century to prove that his country had a Renaissance movement of its own, what more worthy representative of such a movement in England could be established than Shakespeare, whose tremendous vitality was, in any case, most in accord with the current conception of the Renaissance? On the other hand, the wilfulness, extravagance and exuberance of Shakespeare's style were left unexplained. To the problem of this unexplained residue is to be ascribed the fact that about a generation ago, when the concept of the baroque was subjected to revision and the revaluation of the creations of baroque art produced

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something in the nature of a vogue, the idea of the baroque character of Shakespearian drama attracted much support.²²² If one regards passion, pathos, impetuosity, exaggeration as specially characteristic of the baroque, it is, of course, easy to make a baroque poet out of Shakespeare. But it is impossible to establish a concrete parallel between the methods of construction of the great baroque artists like Bernini, Rubens and Rembrandt and those of Shakespeare. The transfer of Woelfflin's categories of the baroque—pictorialness, spatial depth, lack of clarity and unity—to Shakespeare means either indulging in meaningless generalities or basing oneself on mere equivocations. Naturally, Shakespeare's art contains baroque elements, just as Michelangelo's does; but the creator of *Othello* is no more a baroque artist than the creator of the Medici tombs. Each of them is a special case in which elements of the Renaissance, of mannerism and the baroque are intermingled in a particular way; only in Michelangelo Renaissance characteristics, in Shakespeare the manneristic tendencies, predominate. The indissoluble union of naturalism and conventionalism suggests that the best approach to an explanation of Shakespearian form is from the side of mannerism. The continuous mixture of tragic and comic motifs, the mixed nature of the tropes, the gross contrast between the concrete and abstract, the sensual and intellectual elements of the language, the often forced ornamental pattern of the composition, as for example the repetition of the motif of childish ingratitude in *Lear*, the emphasis on the a-logical, the unfathomable and contradictory in life, the idea of the theatrical and the dream-like quality, the compulsions and restraints of human life—all these are arguments for taking mannerism as the starting point of the analysis. The artificiality, affectation and mania for originality in Shakespeare's language are also manneristic and to be explained only by the manneristic taste of the age. His euphuism, his often overladen and confused metaphors, his piling up of antitheses, assonances and puns, his fondness for the complicated, intricate and enigmatic style, are all manneristic, as are also the extravagant, bizarre and paradoxical elements from which no work of Shakespeare's is completely free; the erotic trifling with the masculine disguise of girls played by boys in the comedies, the

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lover with the ass's head in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the negro as the hero in *Othello*, the crinkled figure of Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, the witches in *Macbeth*, the moving forest in *Richard III*, the mad scenes in *Lear* and *Hamlet*, the gruesome Last Judgement atmosphere in *Timon of Athens*, the speaking picture in *A Winter's Tale*, the mechanism of the world of magic in the *Tempest*, etc. etc. All this is part of Shakespeare's style even though they do not exhaust the resources of his art.

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As an artistic style, mannerism conformed to a divided outlook on life which was, nevertheless, spread uniformly all over Western Europe; the baroque is the expression of an intrinsically more homogeneous world-view, but one which assumes a variety of shapes in the different European countries. Mannerism, like Gothic, was a universal European phenomenon, even if it was restricted to much narrower circles than the Christian art of the Middle Ages; the baroque, on the other hand, embraces so many ramifications of artistic endeavour, appears in so many different forms in the individual countries and spheres of cultures, that it seems doubtful at first sight whether it is possible to reduce them all to a common denominator. The baroque of courtly and Catholic circles is not only wholly different from that of middle-class and Protestant communities, the art of a Bernini and a Rubens not only depicts a different inner and outer world from that of a Rembrandt and a van Goyen, but even within these two great tendencies of style further decisive differentiations make themselves felt. The most important of these secondary subdivisions is that of courtly-Catholic baroque into a sensualistic, monumental-decorative tendency, in the traditional meaning of 'baroque', and into a stricter, formally more rigorous 'classicistic' style. It is true that the classicistic current is present in the baroque from the very outset and ascertainable as an under-current in all the special national forms of baroque art, but it does not become predominant until about 1660, under the particular social and political conditions prevailing at this time in

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France. Beside these two basic forms of ecclesiastical and courtly baroque, there is in the Catholic countries a naturalistic tendency which comes forward independently at the beginning of the period, and which has its own particular supporters in Caravaggio, Louis Le Nain and Ribera, but is subsequently immanent in the art of all the important masters. Like classicism in France, it finally prevails in Holland, and in these two tendencies the social factors which determine the baroque make their separate impact.

Since the Gothic period, the structure of art styles had become more and more complicated; the tension between the particular spiritual contents became ever greater and the different elements of art correspondingly more heterogeneous. Before the baroque it was, however, still possible to say whether the artistic approach of an age was fundamentally naturalistic or anti-naturalistic, making for unity or differentiation, classicistic or anti-classicistic—but now art no longer has a uniform stylistic character in this strict sense, it is naturalistic and classicistic, analytical and synthetic at the same time. We are the witnesses of the simultaneous blossoming of absolutely opposite tendencies, and we see contemporaries, like Caravaggio and Poussin, Rubens and Hals, Rembrandt and van Dyck, standing in completely different camps.

It is only recently that the art of the seventeenth century, as a whole, has been classified under the name of baroque. When it first emerged in the eighteenth century, the concept was still applied exclusively to those phenomena of art which were felt, in accordance with the prevailing classicistic aesthetic, to be extravagant, confused and bizarre.²²⁴ Classicism itself was excluded from this concept, which remained predominant almost until the end of the nineteenth century. Not only the attitude of Winckelmann, Lessing and Goethe, but also that of Burckhardt is still guided fundamentally by the point of view of classicistic theory; they all reject the baroque on account of its 'irregularity' and 'capriciousness', and they do so in the name of an aesthetic which reckons the unmistakable baroque artist Poussin among its models of perfection. Burckhardt and the later purists, such as Croce, for example, who are incapable of liberating themselves from the often narrow-minded rationalism of the eighteenth

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century, perceive in the baroque merely the tokens of illogicality and lack of structure, see only the columns and pilasters with nothing to support, the architraves and walls bent and warped, as if they were made of pasteboard, the figures illuminated artificially and conducting themselves unnaturally, as on a stage, the sculptures with their search for the illusionistic surface effects, which belong by rights to painting and which, as the critics have emphasized, should remain its preserve. One would think that the experience of the art of a Rodin, for example, would have been sufficient in itself to make these epigones of classicism realize the meaning and value of such sculpture. But their stipulations against the baroque are also stipulations against impressionism, and when Croce deplores the 'bad taste' of baroque art,²²⁵ he represents, at the same time, academic conventions hostile to modern art.

The reinterpretation and revaluation of the baroque, in the sense in which the term is understood today, an achievement carried out in the main by Woelfflin and Riegl, would have been unthinkable without the previous assimilation of impressionism. Woelfflin's categories of the baroque are, in fact, nothing but the application of the concepts of impressionism to the art of the seventeenth century—that is to say, to a part of this art, for the clarity of the concept of the baroque is obtained even by him at the price of mostly neglecting to consider the classicism of the seventeenth century. The light which is shed on non-classicistic baroque as a result of this one-sidedness is all the more piercing. It is also the reason why the art of the seventeenth century here appears almost exclusively as the dialectical opposite of the art of the sixteenth century and not as its continuation. Woelfflin under-estimates the importance of subjectivism in the Renaissance and over-estimates it in the baroque. He notes in the seventeenth century the beginnings of the impressionistic tendency, which he calls 'the most important reorientation in the history of art',²²⁶ but he fails to recognize that the subjectivization of the artistic world-view, the transformation of the 'tactile' into the 'visual', of substance into mere appearance, conceiving the world as impression and experience, regarding the subjective aspect as primary and emphasizing the transitory character inherent in

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every optical impression—he fails to recognize that all this is consummated in the baroque, but is prepared for to a far-reaching extent by the Renaissance and mannerism. Woefflin, who is not interested in the extra-artistic preconditions of this dynamic world-view, and who conceives of the whole course of the history of art as a self-contained, quasi-logical function, overlooks the real origin of the change of style by ignoring its sociological pre-suppositions. For even if it is perfectly right that the discovery, for example, that the rolling wheel loses its spokes when experienced subjectively, implies a new world-view for the seventeenth century, one must not forget that the development which leads to this and similar discoveries begins with the dissolution of the symbolical painting of ideas and its replacement by the increasingly independent optical view of reality in the Gothic period, and that it is directly connected with the victory of nominalistic over ‘realistic’ thought.

Woefflin develops his system on the basis of five pairs of concepts, in each of which a characteristic of the Renaissance is opposed to a quality of the baroque, and which, with the exception of one of these antinomies, show the same development away from a stricter towards a freer conception of art. The categories are as follows: (1) Linear and painterly; (2) plane and recession; (3) closed and open form; (4) clearness and unclearness; (5) multiplicity and unity. The striving after the ‘painterly’—that is to say, the dissolution of firm, plastic and linear form into something moving, hovering and incapable of being grasped; the obliteration of frontiers and contours, to arouse the impression of the unlimited, the immeasurable and the infinite; the transformation of static, rigid, objective being into a becoming, a function, an interdependence between the subject and the object—constitutes the basis of Woefflin’s conception of the baroque. The tendency away from the plane to the depth gives expression to the same dynamic outlook, the same opposition to everything stable, laid down once and for all, to everything with immovable frontiers, to a world-view in which space is understood as something in process of formation, as a function. The favourite method employed by the baroque to illustrate spatial depth is the use of oversized foregrounds, of *repoussoir* figures brought quite near to

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the beholder and of the sudden reduction in size of background motifs. In this way, space acquires not only an intrinsic mobility, but as a result of the extremely close at hand viewpoint the observer feels the element of space as a form of existence which belongs to him, is dependent on him and, as it were, created by him. The baroque tendency to replace the absolute by the relative, greater strictness by greater freedom, is expressed most powerfully, however, in its fondness for the 'open', a-tectonic form. In a closed, 'classical' composition what is represented is a self-contained phenomenon, all the elements of which are inter-related and interdependent; nothing seems to be superfluous or missing in this coherent whole, whereas the a-tectonic compositions of baroque art always give the impression of being more or less incomplete and disconnected; they seem to point beyond themselves, to be capable of continuation. Everything solid and settled in them begins to waver; the stability expressed by the horizontals and verticals, the idea of balance and symmetry, the principles of filling in the surface and adjusting the picture to the line of the frame, are depreciated; one side of the composition is always emphasized more than the other; again and again the beholder is shown the apparently accidental, improvised and ephemeral instead of the 'pure' aspects of the face and the profile. 'In the final analysis,' says Woelfflin, 'the tendency is to make a picture seem not a self-contained piece of reality, but a passing show in which the beholder has the good luck to participate just for a moment . . . The whole intention is to make the totality of the picture seem unintentional.'²²⁷ The artistic outlook of the baroque is, in a word, cinematic; the incidents represented seem to have been overheard and spied out; every indication that might betray consideration for the beholder is blotted out, everything is presented in apparent accordance with pure chance. The comparative lack of clarity in the presentation is also related to this quality of improvisation. The frequent and often violent overlappings, the excessive differences in the size of objects seen in perspective, the neglect of the directional lines given by the frame of the picture, the incompleteness of the material and the unequal treatment of the motifs are all used intentionally to make it difficult to see the picture as a lucid whole. The normal

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progress of historical evolution itself plays a certain part in the growing distaste for the all too clear and the all too obvious, in the process which moves within a particular, continuously developing culture from the simple to the involved, from the plain to the less plain, from the obvious to the hidden and the veiled. The more cultured, fastidious and intelligently interested in art a public is, the more it demands this intensification of artistic stimuli. But apart from the attraction of the new, the difficult and the complicated, this is once again an attempt to arouse in the beholder the feeling of the inexhaustibility, incomprehensibility and infinity of the representation—a tendency which dominates the whole of baroque art.

All these characteristics are the expression of the same anti-classical impulse towards the unrestrained and the arbitrary; only one of the stylistic criteria discussed by Woelfflin, namely the striving for unity, is the expression of the increased desire for synthesis, and, therefore, for a stricter principle of composition. If, as Woelfflin assumes, the natural process were to proceed in accordance with pure logic, then a tendency to variety, to thematic accumulation and agglomeration, would inevitably be connected with the fondness for the pictorial and for spatial differentiation, for the a-tectonic and the obscure, but in fact the baroque displays in almost all its creations a desire for concentration and subordination. In this respect it is—a point which Woelfflin omits to emphasize—the continuation of the classical art of the Renaissance, not its opposite. Even in the early Renaissance there was already a noticeable striving for unity and subordination, in contrast to the cumulative method of composition of the Middle Ages; the rationalism of the period found its artistic expression in the indivisibility of the conception and the consistency of the approach. The prevalent opinion was that an illusion could arise only if the beholder did not have to alter his point of view and, especially, his standard of fidelity to nature during the assimilation of the work. But the homogeneity of Renaissance art was merely a kind of logical consistency, and the totality in its works nothing but an aggregate and sum total of the details, in which the different components were still clearly recognizable. This comparative independence of the parts comes to an end in baroque

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art. In a composition of Leonardo or Raphael the single elements can still be enjoyed in isolation from one another, whereas in a painting of Rubens or Rembrandt the individual detail no longer has any significance in itself. It is true that the compositions of the baroque masters are richer and more complicated than those of the Renaissance painters, but they are, at the same time, more homogeneous, filled with a greater, deeper, more continuous breath. The unity is no longer merely the result, but the *a priori* of the artistic creation; the artist approaches his subject with a unified vision, and in this vision everything isolated and particular finally perishes. Even Burckhardt recognized that one of the characteristics of the baroque consisted in this destruction of the independent significance of the detailed forms, and Riegl repeatedly emphasizes the insignificance and 'ugliness', that is to say, the lack of proportion of the details in the works of baroque art. Just as in architecture the baroque favours colossal orders and, where the Renaissance divides the separate stories by a horizontal articulation, brings them into a unity by running columns and pilasters up the whole façade, so, in general, it attempts to subordinate the details to a leading motif and to concentrate on one main effect. In this way, the pictorial composition is often dominated by a single diagonal or by a patch of colour, the plastic form by a single curve, and the piece of music by one predominating solo voice.

According to Woelfflin, the development from strictness to freedom, from the simple to the complicated, from closed to open form, represents a typical, consistently recurring process in the history of art. He regards the development of style in the Roman Empire, in the late Gothic, in the seventeenth century and impressionism as parallel phenomena. He believes that in all these cases the objectivity and the formal rigorism of a classical period is followed by a kind of baroque, that is to say, by a subjective sensualism and a more or less radical dissolution of form. He even goes so far as to consider the polarity of these styles the basic formula in the history of art. He believes that if a universal law of periodicity exists anywhere then it must be here. And from this recurrence of the typical styles in art he derives his thesis that the history of art is ruled by an inner logic, by an immanent necessity

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of its own. Woelfflin's unsociological method here leads to an unhistorical dogmatism and to a wholly arbitrary interpretation of history. The Hellenistic, the late medieval, the impressionistic and the real 'baroque' share only so many characteristics as there are similar factors in their sociological background. But even if the succession of classicism and baroque were also evidence of a general law, it would never be possible to explain on immanent, that is to say, on purely formal, grounds, why there is an advance at a particular point in time from strictness to freedom and not from strictness to greater strictness. There is no 'climax' in the development; a summit is reached and a change takes place, when the general historical, that is, social, economic and political, conditions carry their development in a particular direction to an end and change their course. A change of style can only be conditioned from outside—it does not become due for purely internal reasons.

Most of Woelfflin's categories cannot be applied to the classical art of the baroque period. Poussin and Claude Lorrain are neither 'painterly' or 'unclear', nor is the structure of their art a-tectonic. Even the homogeneity of their works is different from the exaggerated, overtense, violent striving for unity of a Rubens. But is it still possible to speak in that case of a stylistic unity of the baroque?—One ought, really, never to speak of a uniform 'style of the time' dominating a whole period, since there are at any given moment as many different styles as there are artistically productive social groups. Even in epochs in which the most influential work is founded on a single class, and from which only the art of this class has come down to us, it ought to be asked whether the artistic products of other groups may have been buried or lost. We know, for example, that in classical antiquity a popular art of mime existed alongside of high tragedy, the importance of which was certainly greater than the fragments that have been preserved would suggest. And in the Middle Ages, the creations of secular and popular art must have been, at any rate, more significant in relation to ecclesiastical art than the works that have survived would lead one to suspect. If, therefore, the production of art was not entirely uniform even in these ages of undivided class rule, how much less will it have been in a

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century like the seventeenth, when there were already several cultured strata, each with its own absolutely individual outlook on social, economic, political and religious matters, and each confronting art with often quite different problems. The artistic aims of the curia in Rome were fundamentally different from those of the royal court in Versailles, and what they had in common, could certainly not be reconciled with the artistic purpose of Calvinist, bourgeois Holland. Nevertheless, it is possible to establish certain common characteristics. For, apart from the fact that the development which promotes intellectual differentiation always helps to integrate, at the same time, by facilitating the spread of cultural products and exchanges between the different cultural regions, one of the most important cultural achievements of the age of the baroque, the new natural science and the new philosophy based on natural science, was international from the outset; but the universal outlook, which found expression here, also dominated the whole art production of the age with all its ramifications.

The new scientific world-view proceeded from Copernicus' discovery. The theory that the earth moves round the sun, instead of the universe moving round the earth, as had previously been maintained, changed the old place in the universe assigned to man by Providence for good and all. For the moment, the earth could no longer be regarded as the centre of the universe, man himself could no longer be regarded as the aim and purpose of creation. But the Copernican theory not only meant that the world ceased to revolve around the earth and man, but also that it no longer had any centre at all and consisted merely in a number of homogeneous and equivalent parts, the unity of which was manifested exclusively in the universal validity of natural law. The universe was, according to this theory, infinite and yet uniform, a co-operative and continuous system organized on a single principle, a coherent and vital whole, an ordered, efficient mechanism—a perfect clockwork, to use the language of the period. Along with the conception of the natural law that allows for no exceptions, there arose the concept of a new kind of necessity, absolutely different from theological foreordination. That meant, however, the undermining not only of the idea of divine

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arbitrariness, but also of the idea of man's prerogative of divine grace and of his participation in the supramundane existence of God. Man became a tiny, insignificant factor in the new disenchanted world. But the most remarkable thing was that, out of this changed position, he developed a new feeling of self-respect and pride. The consciousness of understanding the great, overwhelmingly powerful universe, of which he himself was a mere part, became the source of an unprecedented and boundless self-confidence.

In the homogeneous and continuous world into which the old dualistic Christian reality had become transformed, the place of the earlier anthropocentric world-view was taken by an awareness of the cosmos, that is, by the conception of an infinite continuity of interrelationships embracing man and containing the ultimate ground of his existence. The conception of the universe as an unbroken systematic whole was incompatible with the medieval concept of God, of a personal God standing outside the cosmic system; the world-view of divine immanence, by which medieval transcendentalism was superseded, only recognized a divine power working from within. Certainly, as a fully developed theory all this was new, but the pantheism, which constituted the quintessence of the new doctrine, originated, like most of the progressive elements in the thinking of the Renaissance and the baroque, in the beginnings of the money economy, of the late medieval city, of the new middle class and in the victory of nominalism. "The rise of modern European pantheism is, Dilthey thinks, the work . . . of the intellectual revolution which follows the great thirteenth century and fills nearly three centuries."²²⁸ At the end of this development the fear of the judge of the universe is superseded by the 'frisson métaphysique', by Pascal's anguish in face of the 'silence éternel des espaces infinis', by the wonder at the long unbroken breath which pervades the cosmos.

The whole of the art of the baroque is full of this shudder, full of the echo of the infinite spaces and the interrelatedness of all being. The work of art in its totality becomes the symbol of the universe, as a uniform organism alive in all its parts. Each of these parts points, like the heavenly bodies, to an infinite, unbroken continuity; each part contains the law governing the

CARAVAGGIO: THE CRUCIFIXION OF ST. PETER. Rome, S. Maria del Popolo. About 1600. Caravaggio's naturalism was by no means always in accordance with the taste of his ecclesiastical patrons who often objected to the "vulgarity" in his treatment of biblical subjects.



2. LUDOVICO CARRACCI: MADONNA WITH SAINTS. Bologna, Pinacoteca. Of all the artists of their time the Carracci were the most successful in fulfilling satisfactorily the tasks set them by the Catholic Church. The types of devotional picture created by them became the patterns of modern ecclesiastical art.



1. PIETRO DA CORTONA: CEILING PAINTING in the Palazzo Barber in Rome, 1633-37. Pietro Cortona is the leading master of high baroque mural painting. The pompous decorative style of a later Italian and French interior is unthinkable without his fresco.

2. VIGNOLA: IL GESÙ, Rome 1568-84. The prototype of the Roman baroque church.

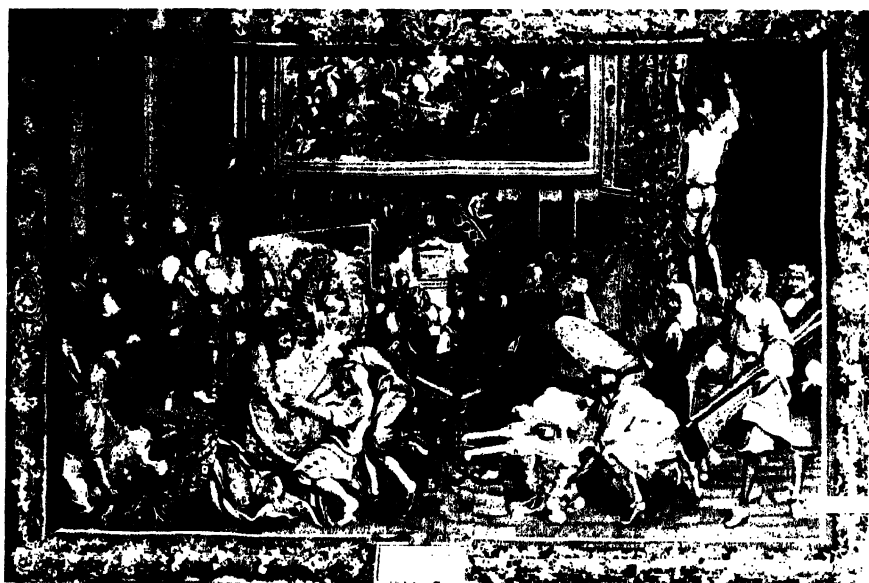




1. LORENZO BERNINI: THE BLESSED LUDOVICA ALBERTONI (Detail) Rome, *S. Francesco a Ripa*, 1674-76. Bernini creates the formal language in sculpture of the somewhat theatrical emotionalism of baroque religiosity.

2. LORENZO BERNINI: FRANCESCO I OF ESTE. *Modena, Galleria Estense*, 1650. Bernini is, at the same time, the leading master of baroque portrait sculpture, the rhetorical forms of which have so much in common with the language of religious emotionalism.





1. LE BRUN: THE 'SALON DE LA GUERRE' in the *Château de Versailles*, 1686. The "art of Versailles" is the epitome of baroque court art.

2. LE BRUN: LOUIS XIV VISITS THE GOBELIN MANUFACTURE. Tapestry in the *Château de Versailles*. About 1667. This tapestry gives a rough idea of the variety of things produced in the Royal Manufactory.



1. **POUSSIN: ET IN ARCADIA EGO**, Paris, Louvre, 1638-39. Poussin is the most important forerunner of *l'Académie* as the painter of pastoral motifs, but he still represents a mythologically classicizing and strictly rationalistic conception of the subject.

2. **LOUIS LE NAIN: PEASANT MEAL**, Paris, Louvre, 1642. The works of Louis Le Nain are amongst the most important creations of the French naturalism in the 17th century.

3. **HYACINTHE RIGAUD: THE PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV**, Paris, Louvre, 1701. This portrait was the highest paid picture of its time; the artist received 40,000 francs for it.

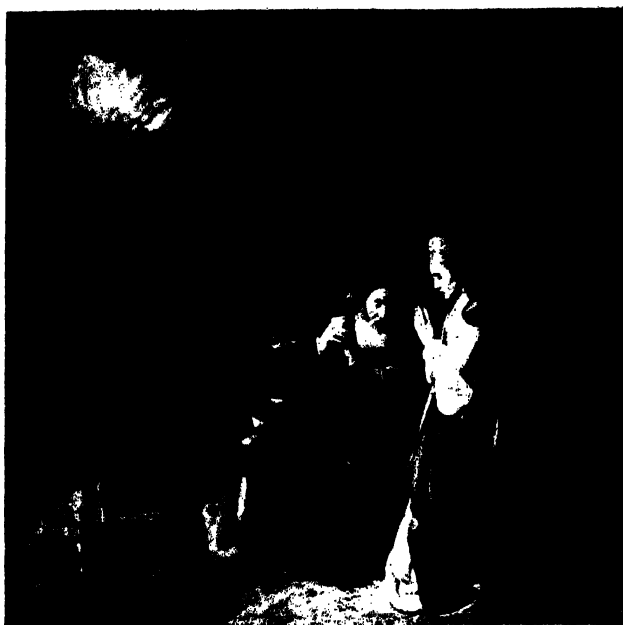


RUBENS: THE RAPE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF LEUCIPPUS. Munich, Pinakothek. About 1618. - From no artist does one gain a more perfect conception of the ideals of the court baroque than from Rubens; none embodies the idea of grandiose form, of imposing external appearance of the great theatrical gesture more impressively than he.



RUBENS: THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI. *Sketch of 1623-24, London, Wallace Collection. Altar-piece of 1624, Antwerp, Museum. Here we have the best illustration of the method of production normal in Rubens' workshop: we see how a great commission is carried out on the basis of the master's sketch.*





1. REMBRANDT: THE SACRIFICE OF MANOAH. *Dresden, Gemäldegalerie, 1641.* Rembrandt, the bourgeois artist par excellence, spiritualizes what in Rubens was a more or less external, albeit extremely effective attitude.



2. REMBRANDT: SELF-PORTRAIT (Detail). *London, National Gallery, About 1660.* It was only in a bourgeois period of art, such as the Dutch 17th century, that the subjective conception of painting was possible which produced the flood of self-portraits of Rembrandt.

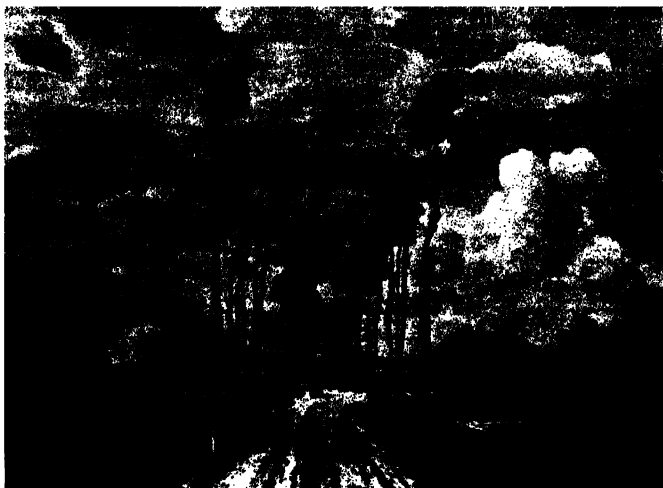


REMBRANDT: THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON. *Leningrad, Hermitage. Late work.* Rembrandt's last works dematerialize reality in a similar way to those of Michelangelo and Greco. The late style of the three masters has many characteristics in common, mediating between mannerism and the baroque.



1. FRANS HALS: THE CIVIC GUARD OF ARCHERS OF ST. GEORGE. *Haarlem, Frans Hals Museum, 1627.* Frans Hals marks the summit of the Dutch group portrait in which the bourgeois class-consciousness of his contemporaries finds the strongest expression.

2. VERMEER VAN DELEFT: THE ALLEGORY OF PAINTING. *Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, About 1665.* The Dutch discover the pictorial charm of the bourgeois interiors and develop therefrom an art of atmospherical effects of which Vermeer is the greatest master.



1. HOBBEEMA: THE AVENUE. London, National Gallery. Between 1663 and 1669. - The intimate relationship between the Dutch and the urban and rural property within whose framework the episodes of their life take place, leads to a new experience of space.

2. ALBERT CUIP: RIVER SCENE WITH CATTLE. London, National Gallery. Between 1655 and 1670. - The Dutch anticipate a good deal of the naturalism of the 19th century; they are the real masters of the painters of Barbizon.



1. PIETER DE HOOCH: COURTYARD OF A DUTCH HOUSE. *London, National Gallery, 1658.* - Pieter de Hooch is the painter of the middle sections of the well-to-do bourgeoisie

2. METSU: MUSIC LESSON. *London, National Gallery, After 1655.* Metsu obviously works for a more refined and wealthy circle than Pieter de Hooch.



3. ADRIAEN VAN DER WERFF: THE REPOSE IN EGYPT. *London, National Gallery.* The works of van der Werff are the best examples of the change in taste which takes place in Holland with the advancing influence of the academic and aristocratic conception of art.

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whole, in each the same power, the same spirit is at work. The impetuous diagonals, the sudden foreshortenings, the exaggerated light and shade effects, everything is the expression of an overwhelming, unquenchable yearning for infinity. Every line leads the eyes into the distance, every form instinct with movement seems to be trying to surpass itself, every motif is in a state of tension and exertion, as if the artist were never quite certain of real success in expressing the infinite. Even behind the calm of the Dutch painters of daily life one feels the impelling force of infinity, the constantly imperilled harmony of the finite. That is doubtless a common characteristic—but is it sufficient to enable us to speak of a homogeneous baroque style? Is it not just as futile to define the baroque as a striving for the infinite as to derive the Gothic merely from the spirituality of the Middle Ages?

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Towards the end of the sixteenth century a striking change takes place in the history of Italian art; cool, complicated, intellectualistic mannerism yields to a sensual, emotional, universally comprehensible style—the baroque. This is the reaction of a conception of art which is partly intrinsically popular, partly held by the ruling cultural class but with consideration for the masses against the intellectual exclusiveness of the preceding period. The naturalism of Caravaggio and the emotionalism of the Carracci represent the two directions. In both camps the high level of culture attained by the mannerists declines. For even in the studio of the Carracci the things which are copied from the great masters of the Renaissance are comparatively simple and the thoughts and feelings to be expressed uncomplicated. Of the three Carracci, only Agostino can really be called ‘cultured’, and Caravaggio is plainly the typical bohemian, hostile to culture and a stranger to all speculation and theorizing.

The historical importance of the Carracci is extraordinary; the history of the whole of modern ‘church art’ begins with them. They transform the difficult, involved symbolism of the mannerists into that simple and solid allegorical style which is the

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origin of the whole development of the modern devotional image with its hackneyed symbols and formulae, the cross, the halo, the lily, the skull, the affectedly pious look, the ecstasies of love and suffering. For the first time, religious art becomes absolutely distinct from profane art. In the Renaissance and the Middle Ages there were still innumerable transitional forms between works of art serving purely ecclesiastical and those serving secular purposes, but with the development of the style of the Carracci a fundamental severance takes place.²²⁹ The iconography of Catholic Church art is fixed and schematized; the Annunciation, the Birth of Christ, the Baptism, the Ascension, the Carrying of the Cross, the Woman of Samaria, Christ as the Gardener and many other biblical scenes attain the form which still holds good today as the standard model for the devotional image. Church art assumes an official character and loses its spontaneous, subjective characteristics; it becomes more conditioned by worship and less by immediate faith. The Church knows only too well the danger with which it is threatened by the subjectivism of the Reformation spirit; it desires that works of art should express the meaning of orthodoxy just as independently of all arbitrary interpretation as the writings of the theologians. Compared with the dangers of artistic freedom, the stereotypy of the works seems the lesser of two evils.

Caravaggio also had great successes to begin with; his influence on the artists of the century went even deeper than that of the Carracci. But, in the long run, his bold, unvarnished, sturdy naturalism was unable to satisfy the taste of his high ecclesiastical patrons; they missed in his work that 'sublimity' and 'nobility' which they considered essential to a religious picture. They objected to his paintings, which were unsurpassed for quality in the Italy of the time, and repeatedly turned them down, as they saw in them merely the unconventional form, and were incapable of understanding the deep piety of the master's genuinely popular language. Caravaggio's failure is sociologically all the more remarkable as he is probably the first great artist, at any rate since the Middle Ages, to be rejected on account of his artistic individuality, and to arouse the repugnance of his contemporaries for precisely the same reasons as were the basis of his

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later fame. But if Caravaggio really is the first master of the modern age to be slighted by reason of his artistic worth, then the baroque signifies an important turning point in the relationship between art and the public, namely the end of the 'aesthetic culture' which begins with the Renaissance and the beginning of that more rigid distinction between content and form in which formal perfection no longer serves as an excuse for any ideological lapse.

In spite of the desire to influence as wide a public as possible, the aristocratic spirit of the Church finds expression everywhere. The curia would like to create a 'folk art' for the propagation of the Catholic faith, but to limit the popular element to simplicity of ideas and forms; it wishes to avoid plebeian directness of expression. The sacred persons portrayed are to speak to the faithful as insistently as possible, but under no circumstance to climb down to them. Works of art are to make propaganda, to persuade, to overwhelm, but must do so in a choice and elevated language. In pursuit of the given propagandistic goal, a certain democratization, and even plebeianization of art cannot be avoided; the effect made by a work is often all the more uncouth the more genuine and the deeper the religious feeling is from which it springs. But the Church is concerned not so much with the deepening as with the dissemination of the faith. To the extent that it secularizes its aims, the religious feeling of the faithful becomes weaker. It is true that the influence of religion loses nothing of its amplitude, on the contrary, piety takes up more space in daily life than before, but it becomes an external routine, and loses its strictly supramundane character.²³⁰ We know that Rubens attended mass every morning, and that Bernini not only communicated twice a week, but, following the counsel of Ignatius, withdrew once a year into the solitude of a monastery, to devote himself to spiritual exercises. But who would assert that these artists were really more religiously-minded than their predecessors?

The affirmative attitude to life, which, with the coming of the baroque, displaces the tendency to escape from the world, is above all a symptom of the tiredness felt after the long wars of religion, and of the readiness to compromise which follows the

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denominational intransigence of the Tridentine period. The Church abandons the fight against the demands of historical reality and strives to adapt itself to them as far as possible. It becomes more and more tolerant towards the faithful, even though it continues to persecute the 'heretics' as mercilessly as ever. But in its own camp it grants all possible freedom; it not only tolerates but promotes interest in the affairs of the world around and sanctions a delight in the interests and joys of secular life. Almost everywhere it becomes a national Church and an instrument of political government, with which is connected *a priori* a far-reaching subordination of spiritual ideals to the interests of the state. Even in Rome, religious considerations have to recede in favour of political exigencies. Sixtus V already makes concessions to unreliable France in order to set a limit to the predominance of orthodox Spain, and under the later baroque Popes the secular trend of the policy of the curia becomes even more obvious.

It now devolves upon Rome to function in full splendour not only as the papal residence but also as the capital of Catholic Christianity. The grandiose, pompous character of court art now comes to predominate in Church art too. Mannerism had to be stern, ascetic, other-worldly, but the baroque is allowed to follow a more liberal, more sensual course. The competitive struggle against Protestantism has come to an end; the Catholic Church has renounced the lost territories and recovered its sense of security in those preserved for the faith. A period of the richest, most luxurious and extravagant art production now begins in Rome. It produces a vaster quantity of churches and chapels, ceiling paintings and altar-pieces, statues of saints and tomb monuments, reliquaries and votive offerings, than any previous age. And it is by no means merely the ecclesiastical branches of art which owe a new wave of prosperity to the revival of Catholicism. The Popes erect not only magnificent churches, but also build magnificent palaces, villas and gardens for themselves. And the cardinal-nepots, who more and more assume the style of royal princes in their way of life, display just as much luxurious extravagance in their buildings. The Catholicism represented by the Pope and the higher clergy becomes more and more official

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and courtly, in contrast to Protestantism, which becomes more and more middle class.²³¹ The bees of the Barberini are to be seen all over baroque Rome, just as the Napoleonic eagle is seen in the Paris of the Empire. But the Barberini are in no sense exceptional among the papal families; apart from them, and the equally famous Farnese and Borghese, the Ludovisi, Pamfili, Chigi and Rospigliosi are among the most zealous friends of art of the age.

Under Urban VIII, the Barberini Pope, Rome became the baroque city as we know it. At least in the first half of his pontificate, Rome still dominates the whole artistic life of Italy and is the artistic centre of the whole of Western Europe. Roman baroque art is international, just as the French Gothic had been; it assimilates all the available forces, and combines all the vital artistic endeavours of the age into the one style which is considered up to date throughout Europe. By about 1620 the baroque had finally made its way in Rome. The mannerists, above all Federigo Zuccari and the Cavaliere d'Arpino, continue to paint, but their trend is out of date and even Caravaggio and the Carracci are already antiquated by historical developments. Pietro da Cortona, Bernini and Rubens are the names that matter now. They form the transition to a development which has its centre no longer in Italy but in Western and Northern Europe. The art of Cortona, the leading master of high baroque fresco painting in Rome, is continued outside Italy in the ebullient and luxuriant style of decoration of the French interiors. In France, where he is received like a prince, Bernini comes up against nationalist opposition and this prevents the execution of his plan for the Louvre. The Duke of Bouillon calls Paris the capital of the world around the middle of the century,²³² and, in fact, France now becomes not only the leading power in Europe politically, but also takes the lead in all matters of culture and taste. With the decline of the influence of the curia and the impoverishment of Rome, the centre of the world of art shifts from Italy to the country where the most progressive political structure of the age, absolute monarchy, is developed and where art production has the most important resources at its disposal.

The victory of absolutism was to a certain extent a con-

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sequence of the wars of religion. At the end of the sixteenth century, France was so weakened by the endless slaughter, the eternal famines and epidemics that the people wanted peace and quiet at any price and longed for a strong regime to take over, or were at least prepared to put up with one. The new policy operated most harshly against the old nobility, which was always on the point of conspiring against the crown and whose opposition had to be broken if the government was to rule undisturbed. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, which always prospers best when there is internal peace and which is always ready to back up the 'policy of the strong hand', gave absolutism its enthusiastic support, and this was highly appreciated by the king and the government. The ennoblement of members of the middle class, which had been under way again for a long time, was now carried on more indiscriminately than ever before. The appointment of commoners to the nobility had at all times been the prize with which the princes had rewarded special services; but since the sixteenth century, the number of ennoblements had increased by leaps and bounds after a limit had already been set to the spread of this practice in the Middle Ages. Francis I honours with the title of nobility not only military but also civil services and even does business in patents of nobility. In the course of time the right to ennoblement is connected with the tenure of certain offices, and in the seventeenth century there are already four thousand office-holders in the law, in the treasury and the administration who belong to the hereditary nobility.²³³ In this way, more and more members of the middle class find admission into the nobility and they already outnumber the birthright aristocracy in the seventeenth century. The old aristocratic families are partly wiped out in the uninterrupted succession of campaigns, civil wars and risings, and partly ruined economically and left unfit to earn a living. For many, accommodation at the court, where they could obtain benefices and pensions by begging, was the only means of existence. Of course, many of the old land-owning nobility continued to live on the land; but most of them led a very frugal life there. The impoverished aristocrats had no longer any ways and means of enriching themselves again and the king would not even grant them a function of their own in

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the state.³³⁴ As the standing army developed, their military importance diminished; offices were usually filled with middle-class elements and the nobility did not regard it as in keeping with their rank to work, that is, to take an active part in industry and commerce.

But the relationship between the king and the absolute state, on the one hand, and the nobility, on the other, is not at all straightforward. Only the rebellious nobility, by no means the nobility as such, are persecuted; on the contrary, the nobility are still considered the backbone of the nation. Their privileges, with the exception of the purely political, continue; their seigniorial rights in relation to the peasants are left as they were, and they retain their full immunity from taxation. Absolutism by no means abolished the old class order of society; it certainly modified the relation of the estates to the king, but it left their relation to one another unaltered.³³⁵ The king still feels that he belongs to the nobility and likes to call himself the first 'gentilhomme' of the country. He compensates the aristocracy for the loss of prestige which they suffer as a result of the new ennoblements, by spreading the legend of their supreme moral and intellectual excellence by all the available means of official art and literature. The distance between the aristocracy and the 'roture', on the one side, and the birthright nobility and the patent nobility, on the other, is artificially enlarged and felt more strongly than hitherto. All this leads to a new aristocratization of society and a fresh renaissance of the old chivalrous-romantic concepts of morality. The real nobleman is now the 'honnête homme', who belongs to the birthright nobility and acknowledges the ideals of chivalry. Heroism and fidelity, moderation and self-control, generosity and politeness, are the virtues of which he must be master. They are all part of the semblance of the beautiful, harmonious world, clothed in which the king and his entourage present themselves to the public. They pretend that these virtues really do matter and, deceiving even themselves at times, they pretend they are the knights of a new Round Table. Hence the unreality of court life, which is nothing but a party game, a brilliantly staged theatrical show. Loyalty and heroism are the names given to slavish subjection by literary propaganda, when

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it is a question of interests of state and the will of the monarch. Politeness usually means 'making the best of a bad bargain', and generosity the attitude that allows the master class to forget that they have become beggars. Moderation and self-control are the only genuine virtues demanded by the aristocratic and courtly life. The spiritually sound man of gentle birth does not wear his heart on his sleeve; he adapts himself to the standards of his class, does not wish to move and persuade others, but to represent his class and to impress. He is impersonal, reserved, cool and strong; he regards all exhibitionism as plebeian, all passions as diseased, incalculable and turbid. One does not let oneself go in the presence of another, least of all in the presence of the king—that is the basic rule of court morality. One does not unbosom oneself, one strives to be pleasant and to represent one's kind as perfectly as possible. Court etiquette is guided by the same principles of good form and keeps to the same style as that in which the king's palaces are built and his gardens trimmed.

But like all the outward forms of the French baroque, court life also passes from a state of comparative freedom to one of strict regimentation. The familiarity in the intercourse between the king and his entourage, which was still so characteristic of the court of Louis XIII, disappears under his successor.²³⁶ The impetuous, exuberant nobleman of earlier days becomes the tame, well-bred courtier. The motley, ever-changing picture of the preceding period yields to a universal monotony. The differences between the individual categories of the court nobility are obliterated; at the court all alike are courtiers now, in relation to the king all are equally unimportant. 'Les grands mêmes y sont petits'—says La Bruyère. Baroque culture becomes more and more an authoritarian court culture. The meaning attributed to 'beautiful', 'good', 'intelligent', 'refined', 'elegant' now depends on what the court considers these qualities to imply. The *salons* also lose their original importance; the court becomes the authoritative forum in all questions of taste. It is the court which gives the great, commanding style of art its guiding principles; here is formed that 'grande manière' which invests reality with an ideal, resplendent, festive and solemn character, and which sets the standard for the style of official art in the whole of Europe. To be

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sure, the French court attains the international recognition of its manners, fashion and art at the expense of the national character of French culture. The French, like the ancient Romans, look upon themselves as citizens of the world, and nothing is more typical of their cosmopolitan outlook than the fact that in all the tragedies of Racine, as has been noted, not a single Frenchman appears.

It is absolutely wrong to see in the classicism of this court culture the French 'national style'. Classicism has just as long and almost as unbroken a tradition in Italy as in France. In the seventeenth century, there is hardly anywhere to be found a purely and exclusively sensualistic baroque based entirely on wealth and direct effect of motifs; wherever baroque endeavours are found, we also discover a more or less developed classicism. But it is no more accurate to speak of the French 'grand siècle' as a historically clear-cut epoch pursuing consistent artistic aims, than it is to talk about the uniformity of the baroque. In reality, a deep cleft breaks the century into two exactly distinguishable phases of style with the beginning of the personal government of Louis XIV as the dividing line.²³⁷ Before 1661, that is, under Richelieu and Mazarin, a comparatively liberal tendency still predominates in artistic life; artists are not yet under state tutelage, there is still no government-organized art production, there is still no general acceptance of rules sanctioned by the state. The 'great century' is by no means identical with the age of Louis XIV as was still thought long after Voltaire. The life-work of Corneille, Descartes and Pascal was completed before the death of Mazarin; Louis XIV never met Poussin and Le Sueur; Louis Le Nain died in 1648, Vouet in 1649. Of the important authors of the century, only Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, Boileau, Bossuet and La Rochefoucauld can be regarded as the representatives of the age of Louis XIV. But when the King takes the government into his own hands, even La Rochefoucauld is already 48, La Fontaine 40, Molière 39 and Bossuet 34 years old; only Racine and Boileau are young enough for their intellectual development to be influenced from outside. In spite of its important writers, the second half of the century is nothing like so creative as the first. The general type rather than the particular artistic personality

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prevails everywhere and even more exclusively in the fine arts than in poetry and literature. The individual works of art lose their autonomy, and amalgamate into the total ensemble of an interior, a house or a palace; they are more or less all merely the parts of a monumental decoration. From 1661 onwards political imperialism is paralleled by an intellectual imperialism. No department of public life is spared from the intervention of the state: law, administration, trade, religion, literature and art, everything is regulated from outside. For the arts Le Brun and Boileau are the legislators, the academies are the courts of law, and the protectors are the King and Colbert. Art and literature lose their relationship with real life, with the traditions of the Middle Ages and the mind of the broader masses of the people. Naturalism is tabooed, because the desire is to see everywhere in art the picture of an arbitrarily constructed and forcibly conserved world instead of reality itself, and form enjoys a preference over content, because, as Retz says, the veil is never lifted from certain things.²³⁸ Molière is the only writer to maintain the connection with the folk poetry of the Middle Ages, and even he speaks contemptuously of the

. . . fade goût des monuments gothiques,
Ces monstres odieux des siècles ignorants.²³⁹

The provinces and the regional centres of culture lose their importance, 'la Cour et la Ville', Versailles and Paris, are the stage on which the whole of French intellectual life takes place. All this leads to the complete belittling of individuality, personal style and initiative. The subjectivism that was still predominant in the period of the high baroque, roughly in the second third of the century, yields to a uniformly regulated culture of authority.

Like all the forms of life and culture of the age, first of all the mercantilist economic system, the aesthetic of classicism is guided by the principles of absolutism—the absolute primacy of the political conception over all the other expressions of cultural life. The special characteristic of the new social and economic forms is the anti-individualistic tendency derived from the idea of the absolute state. Mercantilism is also, in contrast to the older form

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of profit economy, based on state-centralism, not on individual units, and it attempts to eliminate the regional centres of trade and commerce, the municipalities and the corporations, that is to say, to put state-autonomy in the place of separate autarchies. And just as the mercantilists try to destroy all economic liberalism and particularism, so, too, the representatives of official classicism want to put an end to all artistic freedom, to every effort to achieve a personal taste, to all subjectivism in the choice of theme and form. They demand that art should be universally valid, that is to say, a formal language, with nothing arbitrary, bizarre, peculiar about it, and which corresponds to the ideals of classicism as the regular, lucid, rational style par excellence. They have not the slightest awareness of how restricted their idea of 'universality' is and of how few they are thinking when they talk about 'everybody' and 'anybody'. Their universalism is a fellowship of the élite—of the élite as formed by absolutism. There is hardly a rule or a requirement of classicistic aesthetics which is not based on the ideas of this absolutism. The desire is that art should have a uniform character, like the state, should produce the effect of formal perfection, like the movement of a corps, that it should be clear and precise, like a decree, and be governed by absolute rules, like the life of every subject in the state. The artist should be no more left to his own devices than any other citizen; he should rather be guided by the law, by regulations, so as not to go astray in the wilderness of his own imagination.

The quintessence of classical form is discipline, limitation, the principle of concentration and integration. This principle is expressed nowhere so characteristically as in the dramatic 'unities' which had come so much to be taken for granted in French classicism that, after 1660, they are never questioned, but at most formulated differently.²⁴⁰ For the Greeks, the spatial and temporal restrictions of the drama resulted from the technical presuppositions of their stage; they were, therefore, able to treat them as elastically as actual theatrical possibilities allowed. But for the French, the doctrine of the unities was also directed against the extravagant, uneconomical method of composition of the Middle Ages, which had led to an endless accumulation of episodes. They were not only acknowledging their indebtedness

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to classical antiquity but, at the same time, they were taking leave of 'barbarism'. In this respect, too, the baroque signified the final dissolution of the medieval cultural tradition. Now, after the failure of mannerism's last attempt to restore it, the medieval age really comes to an end. The feudal nobility have lost all their importance in the state as a military class; the political communities have become transformed into absolute, that is, modern national, states; unified Christianity has disintegrated into Churches and sects; philosophy has made itself independent of religiously directed metaphysics and turned itself into the 'natural system of the sciences'; art has overcome medieval objectivism and become the expression of subjective experience. The unnatural, coercive, and often forced quality, which distinguishes modern from classical and Renaissance classicism, is due precisely to the fact that the striving for the typical, the impersonal, the universally valid now has to make its way against the artist's subjectivity. All the laws and regulations of classicistic aesthetics are reminiscent of the paragraphs of the penal code; the whole constabulary of the academies is needed to secure their universal observance. The compulsion to which artistic life is subject in France is expressed most directly in these academies. The concentration of all utilizable forces, the suppression of all individual effort, the supreme glorification of the idea of the state as personified in the king, these are the tasks which the academies are called upon to deal with. The government wishes to dissolve the personal relationship between the artist and the public and to make them directly dependent on the state. It wants to bring to an end both private patronage and the promotion of private interests and aspiration by artists and writers. From now on they are to serve only the state,²⁴¹ and the academies are to educate them for and hold them to this subservient position.

The 'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture', which begins its activities in the year 1648 as a free society of members all entitled to the same rights and granted admission in unlimited numbers, is transformed into a state institution with a bureaucratic administration and a strictly authoritarian board of directors, after receiving a royal subvention since 1655, but especially after 1664, when Colbert becomes the 'surintendant des bâti-

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ments', that is to say, something like a Minister of Fine Arts, and Le Brun becomes the 'premier peintre du roi' and the perpetual director of the Academy. For Colbert, who, in this way, makes the Academy directly dependent on the King, art is nothing but an instrument of state government with the special function of raising the prestige of the monarch, on the one hand, by developing a new myth of kingship, and, on the other, by intensifying the splendour of the court as the framework of the royal dominion. Neither the King nor Colbert has a real understanding or a genuine love of art. The King is incapable of thinking of art except in connection with his own person. 'I entrust to you the most precious thing on earth—' he once said in an address to the leading members of his Academy 'my fame.' He makes Racine, his historian, Le Brun and van Meulen, his history and war painters, visit the scenes of his campaigns, and shows them round the camp himself, explaining technical military details to them and seeing to their personal safety. But he has not the slightest idea of the artistic significance of his favourites. When Boileau once remarked that Molière was the greatest writer of the century, he replied in astonishment: 'But I never knew that.'

The Academy has at its disposal all the benefices that an artist can ever hope to receive, and all the instruments of power calculated to intimidate him. It makes state appointments, bestows public commissions and confers titles; it has a monopoly in art education and is able to supervise the development of an artist from his first beginnings until his ultimate employment; it awards prizes, above all the Rome prize, and pensions; permission to exhibit and to take part in competitions has to be obtained from it; the views on art which it represents are regarded with special respect by the public and assure a favoured position from the outset for the artist who conforms to them. From its very foundation, the Academy of Fine Arts devoted itself to art education, but it is only after its reform by Colbert that it enjoys the prerogative of art instruction; from then onwards no artist outside the Academy is allowed to give public instruction and to let his pupils draw from life. In 1666, Colbert founds the 'Académie de Rome', and ten years later he affiliates it to the Paris Academy, by making Le Brun the head of the Rome

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Academy as well. From now on artists are purely the creatures of the state educational system; they can no longer escape from the influence of Le Brun. They stand under his supervision in the Paris Academy, they have to conform to his directives in Rome, and if they stand the test there, the best they can hope for is to be employed by the state under Le Brun as their chief.

Besides the monopoly of art education, the state organization of art production is also part of the system which secures absolute predominance for the court style and its rules. Colbert makes the King the only important patron of art in the country and turns the aristocracy and high finance out of the art market. The royal building activity in Versailles, at the Louvre, on the Invalides, on the church of Val-de-Grâce, absorbs nearly all the available artistic labour. The emergence of patrons, like Richelieu or Fouquet, would now have been impossible on technical grounds alone. In the same way as he made the Academy the centre of art education, in 1662 Colbert also organizes the tapestry manufactory acquired from the Gobelins family and makes it the framework for all art production in the country. Thus he brings together in a common task architects and ornamental draughtsmen, painters and sculptors, tapestry-weavers and cabinet-makers, silk and cloth weavers, bronze-founders and goldsmiths, ceramists and glassblowers. Under Le Brun, who also takes over the management here, the *Manufacture des Gobelins* develops an enormous activity. All the works of art and decoration for the royal palaces and gardens are produced in its workshops. Here, too, the King has the works of art made which he gives as presents to foreign courts and important personalities abroad. At the same time, everything that comes out of the royal manufactory is marked by impeccable taste and technical perfection. The union of the late medieval tradition of craftsmanship with what had been learnt from the Italians produces achievements in the decorative arts which have never been surpassed and which, even if they are lacking in individual excellence, have an all the more uniform level of quality. To be sure, works of painting and sculpture now also acquire an industrial character. Painters and sculptors produce sets, repeat and vary fixed patterns, and treat the decorative framework with the same care as the works of art

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themselves—if they feel the dividing line between the work of art and the framework at all. The mechanized, factory-like method of manufacture leads to a standardization of production both in the applied and the fine arts.²⁴² The new technique of manufacture makes it possible to discover aesthetic values in the stereotyped article and to under-estimate the value of uniqueness, of unrepeatable individual form. But the fact that this tendency by no means keeps abreast with technical development, and that later ages return to the earlier Renaissance conception of art in their appreciation of individuality, indicates that the impersonal character of the 'Louis XIV style' depends not only on the technical presuppositions of production, that is to say, on manufacturing, but that other factors are also operative. Mechanical production is, incidentally, older than the mechanistic philosophy of the seventeenth century and the impersonal art philosophy that went with it.²⁴³

Almost everything produced in the 'Gobelins' originates under the personal supervision of Le Brun. He himself draws many of the plans; others are prepared according to his instructions and executed under his immediate surveillance. The 'art of Versailles' takes its shape here and is in essentials the creation of Le Brun. Colbert knew perfectly well whom he was making his confidant: Le Brun directed the institutions in his charge according to strictly doctrinaire and totalitarian principles, wholly in the spirit of his master. He was a dogmatist and a friend of absolute authority, and, at the same time, a man of the greatest experience and trustworthiness in all technical matters of art. For twenty years he remained the art dictator of France, and as such he became the real creator of the 'academicism' to which French art owed its world fame. Colbert and Le Brun were pedantic natures who desired to see theories not merely obeyed, but laid down in black and white. In 1664 the famous *conférences* were introduced at the Academy and continued for ten years. These Academy lectures always began with the analysis of a picture or a piece of sculpture, and the lecturer summed up his opinion of the work under review in a dogmatic proposition. This was followed by a discussion, which it was intended should achieve the formulation of a generally valid rule; often this was realized only

by taking a vote or by the decision of a referee. Colbert desired that the results of these lectures and discussions, which he called 'préceptes positifs', should be 'registered', like the decisions of a committee, in order, in this way, to obtain for perpetual reference a solid fund of authoritative aesthetic principles. There was, in fact, formed a canon of artistic values, which had never before been formulated with so much clarity, absoluteness and precision. In Italy, on the other hand, academic theory preserved a certain liberality in its approach; it was nothing like so uncompromising as in France. This difference has been explained by the fact that in Italy aesthetics had resulted from the native and on the whole homogeneous practice of art, whereas it came to France along with Italian art as an import, intended for the upper classes, and as such found itself from the outset opposed to both the medieval and the popular art tradition of the country.²⁴⁴ But even here it was still much more liberal around the middle of the century than later on. Félibien, the friend of Poussin and the author of the *Entretiens sur la vie et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres* (1666), still acknowledges the importance of artists like Rubens and Rembrandt, still emphasizes that there is nothing in nature that is not beautiful and cannot be given artistic shape, and still attacks the slavish imitation of the great masters. The most important elements of academic aesthetics are, however, already present in his work, above all the thesis of the correction of nature by art and the primacy of drawing over colour.²⁴⁵ But the real classicistic doctrine is not developed until the sixties by Le Brun and his followers; it is then that the academic canon of beauty is first constituted, with its models of classical antiquity, Raphael, the masters of Bologna and Poussin, all of which are above criticism, and from then onwards unconditional consideration for the fame of the King and the reputation of the court becomes all important in the portrayal of historical and biblical subjects. The opposition to this academic doctrine and the corresponding practice of art very soon makes itself felt, however, in spite of the premiums that are put on the observance of the academic rule. Even in Le Brun's time a certain tension arises between the official art, which is the product of a cautious cultural programme, and spontaneous artistic activity both inside and out-

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side the academic circle. Beside Le Brun himself, there was never really any artist with an absolutely orthodox style; but from 1680 the general taste in art already turns quite openly against the dictates of Le Brun.

The tension between the outlook of official, whether ecclesiastical or courtly, circles and the taste of the artists and friends of art, who are, on the whole, not interested in what these circles think, is not peculiar to French artistic life, but is typical of the whole of baroque. Only in France the antagonism which had already found expression in the attitude of the various sections of the public for and against Caravaggio, for example, was intensified. For, although it may well have happened even in earlier times that a gifted artist or artistic trend was not to the liking of some ecclesiastical or secular patron or other, nevertheless, before the age of the baroque no fundamental distinction could be made between an official art and an art appealing to the general public. Now it happens for the first time that the progressive tendencies have to fight not merely against the inertia of the natural process of development, but also against the conventions which are supported by the all-powerful authority of the state and the Church. The typically modern conflict, so familiar to us, between the conservative and the progressive factors in artistic life, which results not merely from a difference of taste, but is waged, above all, as a struggle for power, and as one in which all the privileges and opportunities are on the side of the conservatives and all the disadvantages and dangers on the side of the progressives, is unknown before the baroque. Of course, even in earlier days there were, as well as the people who understood art, also those who neither understood nor were interested in it, but now two parties arise within the art public itself, one hostile to progress and innovation, and the other liberal and interested in new developments from the very start. The antagonism between these two parties, between an academic-official and a non-official, free art, the quarrel between an abstract, programmatically drawn-up aesthetic and a dynamic one developing in conjunction with everyday practice, invests the baroque and the following period with its special, modern character. The fight between the Poussinistes and the Rubénistes, the opposition between the

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classicistic-linear and the sensualistic-pictorial tendency which ends with the final victory of the colourists over Le Brun and his supporters, was merely a symptom of the general tension. The choice between drawing and colour was more than a technical question; the decision for colouring implied a stand against the spirit of absolutism, rigid authority and the rational regimentation of life—it was the sign of a new sensualism and finally led to phenomena such as Watteau and Chardin.

The opposition in the seventies to the academicism of Le Brun prepared the way for a new development in art in more than one respect.²⁴⁶ A circle of people interested in art was then being formed for the first time consisting not only of specialists, that is to say, artists, patrons and collectors, but also of such laymen as presumed to express an opinion of their own on works of art. Hitherto the Academy had granted the exclusive right to express an opinion on artistic questions, and it granted that right only to professionals. Now, all at once, its authority to do so was disputed. Roger de Piles, the theorist of the generation following Félibien, championed the rights of the lay public, arguing that unprejudiced, simple taste was also entitled to have its say, and that common sense and the natural, impartial eye may well be in the right as opposed to rules and regulations and expert opinion. The first victory of the lay public is to be explained partly by the fact that the payments which Louis XIV caused to be made to artists became more and more trifling towards the end of his reign, and that the Academy was more or less forced to appeal to the wider public, in order to recoup itself for the loss of its government subsidy.²⁴⁷ It was, however, only the following century which drew the logical conclusion from the propositions of de Piles; Du Bos was the first to stress the point that the purpose of art is not to 'teach' but to 'move', and that the only adequate attitude to take up to it is not one of reason but of 'feeling'. It was not until the eighteenth century that anyone dared to emphasize the superiority of the layman to the specialist and to express the idea that the feelings of people who are constantly dealing with the same thing necessarily become blunt, whereas those of the amateur and the layman remain natural and fresh.

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The constitution of the art public did not change from one day to the next; even the simple, unprofessional appreciation, in fact the mere interest in works of art, was dependent on certain educational conditions, which only comparatively few people were in a position to fulfil in seventeenth-century France. But the art public grew in size from day to day, embraced increasingly diverse elements of the population and at the end of the century already formed a social group that was by no means so homogeneous and so malleable as the court public of the Le Brun period, which is not by any means to say that the public of classicistic art was absolutely uniform and restricted entirely to court circles. The archaic severity, the impersonal stereotyped quality, the die-hard conventionalism of that art were certainly characteristics in accordance with the aristocratic outlook on life—since for a class which bases its privileges on antiquity, blood and general bearing, the past is more real than the present, the group more substantial than the individual, moderation and self-discipline more praiseworthy than temperament and feeling—but the rationalism of classicistic art was just as typical an expression of the middle-class philosophy as of that of the nobility. This rationalism was, in fact, rooted in the bourgeois way of thinking more deeply than in that of the nobility, which had merely taken over the rationalistic conception of life from the bourgeoisie. In any case, the efficient, profit-making burgher had begun to conform to a rationalistic scheme of living earlier than the aristocrat merely interested in his privileges. And the middle-class public found pleasure in the clarity, simplicity and terseness of classicistic art more quickly than the nobility, who were still under the influence of the romanesque, bombastic, capriciously extravagant taste of the Spaniards at a time when the middle class was already showing enthusiasm for the lucidity and regularity of Poussin's art. At any rate, the works of this master, almost all of which arose in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, were bought for the most part by members of the bourgeoisie, by civil servants, merchants and financiers.²⁴⁸ As is known, Poussin did not accept any orders for big decorative paintings; throughout his life, he kept to smaller sizes and a more unassuming style. He also only rarely accepted ecclesiastical commissions;

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he did not feel there was any kind of connection between the classicistic style and the purely ceremonial purposes of art.²⁴⁹

The court gradually changed over from the sensualistic to the classicistic baroque, just as the aristocracy adopted the economic rationalism of the middle class, in spite of its dislike of anything to do with figures. Both classicism and rationalism were in keeping with the progressive trend of development; sooner or later they were accepted by all classes of society. By following classicism, court circles were adopting an originally middle-class tendency, but they transmuted its simplicity into solemnity, its economic use of resources into reserve and self-control, its clarity and regularity into a rigorous and uncompromising attitude. Naturally, it was only the upper strata of the middle class who found pleasure in classicistic art, and even these were not exclusively devoted to it. To be sure, the rational organization of classicism was in accordance with their objective way of thinking, but, owing to their practical and realistic outlook on life, they were more responsive to naturalistic impressions. In spite of Poussin's rationalism, the naturalist Louis Le Nain is the middle-class painter par excellence.²⁵⁰ But naturalism remained by no means the exclusive property of the middle class. Like rationalism, it became for all classes of society an indispensable intellectual weapon in the struggle for existence. Not only business success, but also success at court and in the *salons* presupposed psychological acumen and a subtle knowledge of men. And even though the rise of the middle class and the beginnings of modern capitalism had given the first impetus to the formation of that anthropology with which the history of modern psychology begins, nevertheless, the real origin of our art of psychological dissection is to be found at the courts and in the *salons* of the seventeenth century. The psychology of the Renaissance, the basis of which was, to begin with, purely scientific, acquires a practical, ethical character in the autobiographical writings of Cellini, Cardano and Montaigne, and above all in the historical characterizations and analyses of Machiavelli. Machiavelli's psychology of exposure already contains the principle of the whole of subsequent psychological literature; his conception of egoism and hypocrisy serves the whole century as a key to the under-

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standing of the hidden motives of human passions and actions. Naturally, the Machiavellian method had to go through a long development at the court and in the *salons* of Paris before it could become the instrument of a La Rochefoucauld. The observations and formulations of the 'Maximes' are unthinkable without the social arts and culture of this court and these *salons*. The mutual observation of the members of these circles in their daily intercourse, the critical spirit which everybody cultivates at the other's expense, the cult of *bon mots* and *médiance* which is their pastime, the intellectual competition which develops amongst them, their endeavour to express an idea in the most surprising, the cleverest and most pointed way, the self-analysis of a society which becomes its own problem and the theme of constant reflection, the analysis of feelings and passions, which is carried on as a kind of party game—all these factors are the background of the characteristic questions and typical answers of La Rochefoucauld. In this milieu he found not merely the first suggestion for his ideas but it was also here that they will have first proved their effectiveness.

Together with the courtly *savoir-vivre* and social culture of the *salons*, the pessimism of the disillusioned nobility, deprived of the very content of its life, is one of the most important sources of the new psychology. Mme de Sévigné says somewhere that she often had such sad conversations with Mme de Lafayette and La Rochefoucauld that probably the best thing they could have done would be to have had themselves buried. All three belong to that exhausted aristocracy which, forced out of active life, holds on to its social prejudices despite their lack of success. Like Retz and Saint-Simon, they are aristocratic amateurs, for whom social quality, the direct expression of class and rank, is much more real than for the middle-class writers, who feel themselves to be supremely individuals. It is by no means an engaging picture of man that they draw, and yet it is correct, as has been said, that, seen through their eyes, there is no longer anything sinister and terrible about the individual; he is no longer a 'horrible secret', a 'monstre incompréhensible', as he still is in Pascal and even in Corneille, but, 'stripped of all extraordinary qualities, he attains an average, handy, easily manageable size'.²⁵¹

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There is no longer any mention here of his sins, of his transgressions against God, against himself and against his neighbour as his brother, as blood of his blood; all spiritual impulses and qualities of character, all virtues and vices, are now measured merely by the criterion of sociability.

The *salons* had their heyday in the first half of the century, at a time when the court was not yet the cultural centre of the country, and it was still a question of creating a real public for art and a forum of sound judgement, which, in the absence of professional critics, was intended to pass sentence on the quality of works of art. In this way, the *salons* became small, unofficial academies at which literary fame and literary fashions were created and which, because of their freer communication with the outside world and their internal freedom, were calculated to establish a much more direct connection between the producers and the consumers of art than the court and the real academies in later years. It is impossible to overrate the educational and cultural importance of the *salons*, but the literary output directly initiated by them is not very significant. Not one single great talent emerged even from the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the first and most important of all the *salons*;²⁵² the *Guirlande de Julie*, which was compiled for a daughter of the Marquise, the prototype of all albums for young girls, is the most representative literary product of this circle. Even the precious style can only be called the creation of the *salons* in a limited sense; it is, in fact, only the French variant and continuation of marinism, gongorism, euphuism and all the other manneristic arts of make-believe. What we have here is simply the typical mode of expression and communication of people who often meet each other and who create their own jargon—a secret language of which they understand the slightest hints and intimations, but which remains unpalatable, nay, unintelligible to others and of which it is the favourite occupation of the initiated to intensify the strangeness and secrecy. Without going back to the Alexandrines, the ‘dark rhyming’ of the troubadours already had affinities with this artificial and sectarian language in that it was also, above all, a means of avoiding social levelling and always on the outlook for unusual, unnatural and difficult words and formulations as tokens

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of social distinction. But it has been rightly emphasized that preciousness was by no means merely the passing folly of a small circle; the precious style was spoken not only by a few dozen cultured and high-spirited ladies, and a few untalented or only moderately talented poets; the whole of the French intellectual élite of the seventeenth century was more or less precious—even the austere Corneille and the middle-class Molière. Even when they were at the highest pitch of excitement, the heroes and heroines on the stage did not forget their good breeding and still addressed each other as Monsieur and Madame. They remained polite and chivalrous in all circumstances; but this gallantry was only a formality, from which it is impossible to draw conclusions as to the sincerity of their feelings—like every form and every language, it used the same words to express authentic and unauthentic sentiments.²⁵³

The *salons* also contributed to the development of an art public by bringing together in their circle connoisseurs and people interested in art from widely differing classes of society. It was here that members of the hereditary nobility, who were, of course, in a majority, met representatives of the official nobility and the bourgeoisie—especially the financiers—who were already playing a part in the world of art and literature.²⁵⁴ The nobility still provided the country with the army officers, the provincial governors, the diplomats, the court functionaries and the high ecclesiastical dignitaries, whereas the bourgeoisie not only occupied the important posts in the law courts and in the treasury, but was also beginning to compete with the nobility in cultural life. In France business men never enjoyed the esteem which was shown to them in Italy and England or Germany; they could acquire a more elevated social position only by dint of a higher education and an elevated mode of life. Hence their children were nowhere so eager to give up business life and become highbrow *rentiers* as in France. The French writers who, at the time of the Renaissance, are still mostly descended from the nobility, already belong very largely to the middle class in the seventeenth century. Alongside the relatively few aristocrats and Church leaders who now play a part in French literature, such as the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, the Marquise de

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Séigné and Cardinal Retz—Racine, Molière, La Fontaine and Boileau, to mention only the most important names, are ordinary members of the bourgeoisie and professional writers. The social position of Molière and his relation to the different classes of society is particularly characteristic of the conditions of the age. By descent, intellectual attitude and the character of his art, he is a thoroughgoing bourgeois. He owes his first decisive successes and his understanding of the needs of the theatre to his contact with the broad masses of the public. All his life, he remains critical and often plebeianly disrespectful in his outlook, seeing the ridiculous and the vulgar in the sly peasant, the petty merchant, the vain bourgeois, the coarse squire and the stupid count with the same penetration and representing it with the same candour. But he is careful not to attack the institution of monarchy, the authority of the Church, the privileges of the nobility, the idea of social hierarchy, or even a single duke or marquis. To this wariness he owes the favour of the King, who again and again protects him from the attacks of the court. If it was not so difficult to distinguish a conservative from a revolutionary in the realm of art, one might, therefore, be inclined to call Molière a writer who never disowns his social origins, but is essentially a conservative who for opportunist reasons became the upholder of the prevailing social order. In any case, Molière can certainly not be included in the same category as Aristophanes, although, in some respects, he was more servile. He must be reckoned rather as one of the writers who, in spite of all their subjective conservatism, have become the pioneers of progress by their unmasking of social reality or at least a part of this reality. From this point of view, to be sure, Beaumarchais's Figaro will no longer figure as the first harbinger of the revolution, but merely as the successor of Molière's servants and chambermaids.

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The Spanish rule in Flanders and its acceptance by the upper classes produced conditions very similar to those prevailing in the

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France of the same period. Here too the aristocracy was made absolutely dependent on the power of the state and transformed into a docile court nobility; here too the ennoblement of the bourgeoisie and its inclination to turn its back on business life as soon as possible was a predominant characteristic of social development;²⁵⁵ here too an almost monopolistic position was granted to the Church, though it had, as in France, to pay the price of becoming an instrument of government; here too the culture of the ruling classes took on an entirely courtly character and gradually lost all connection not only with popular traditions but also with the still more or less middle-class inspired outlook of the Burgundian court. In particular, art also had on the whole an official stamp, only, in contrast to the French baroque, it had a religious tendency at the same time—which is to be explained, above all, by the Spanish influence. Another difference was that there was no state-organized production of art and no complete absorption of all works of art by the court, not only because the archducal court was incapable of financing such production, but also because that kind of regimentation would have been incompatible with the conciliatory manner in which the Habsburgs desired to rule in Flanders. Even the Church, far and away the most important institution interested in art, merely prescribed a general, Catholic line, but did not impose any particular obligation on art, either in relation to the basic mood or the thematic details of the representation. Restored Catholicism allowed the artist more freedom here than elsewhere, and it is owing to this liberal attitude that Flemish art was less formalistic and more spontaneous than court art in France, and also more natural and cheerful in its general mood than Church art in Rome. Even if all the circumstances do not explain the artistic genius of a Rubens, they make it clear that it was in the courtly and ecclesiastical milieu of Flanders that he found the form peculiar to his art.

Nowhere outside the South German countries was the restored Catholic Church so successful as in Flanders,²⁵⁶ and never was the alliance between Church and state so intimate as under Albert and Isabella, that is, in the golden age of Flemish art. The Catholic idea related itself to the idea of monarchy just as

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naturally here as Protestantism identified itself with the Republic in the North. Catholicism derived the sovereignty of the ruler from God, in accordance with the principle of the representation of the faithful by the spiritual estate; Protestantism, on the other hand, with its belief that all men are the children of God, was essentially hostile to authority. But the choice of denomination was often adapted to political standpoint. Immediately after the Revolt, the Catholics in the North were still almost as numerous as the Protestants; it was only later that they went over to the enemies of Rome. The religious antagonism between the southern and the northern states was, therefore, by no means the real reason for the cultural opposition between the two territories; but this opposition can neither be derived from the racial character of the population—it has economic and sociological causes, which also explain the fundamental stylistic difference within Netherlandish art. In no period of the history of art is the sociological analysis of developments more rewarding than here, when two such basically different trends as Flemish and Dutch baroque arise almost simultaneously, in close geographical proximity, under quite similar external conditions. This subdivision of styles, the analysis of which allows us, therefore, to exclude all non-sociological factors, can be regarded as a supreme test case for the sociology of art.

Philip II, in whose reign the bifurcation of Netherlandish culture takes place, was a progressive sovereign who wanted to introduce into the Netherlands the achievements of absolutism, the system of the centralized state and the rationalism of a planned budget.²⁵⁷ The whole country rose in revolt against this programme: the North successfully, the South unsuccessfully. The 'Catholic' southern provinces rebelled just as bitterly against the new financial sacrifices which the centralized government demanded from the middle class as the 'Protestant' North. The cultural opposition between the two regions did not appear before the conflict with Spain; it only developed as a consequence of the different fortunes which attended the struggle, as the reflection of the social differences which had resulted from the outcome of the revolt in the South and North. The middle-class attitude to Spain was the same everywhere, to begin with; and it was this

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class, with its guild background and its preference for decentralization, that thought and felt conservatively, not the monarch, who had been brought up in the ideological atmosphere of political rationalism and mercantilism. The bourgeoisie wanted, above all, to preserve its autonomy in the towns and the privileges connected therewith, and it was agreed on this throughout the country. The story of the Protestant and republican Dutchmen who revolted against the Catholic despot, with the merciless Inquisition and the infamous rabble of soldiers in the background, is no more than a pretty legend. The Dutch did not rise against Spain because they were Protestants, although the individualism of the Protestant faith may have intensified the impetuosity of their rebellion.²⁵⁸ Catholicism was, intrinsically, no more reactionary than Protestantism was revolutionary,²⁵⁹ except perhaps that a Calvinist revolted against his king with a better conscience than a Catholic. However that may be, the rising in the Netherlands was a revolution of conservatives.²⁶⁰ The victorious northern provinces were defending medieval concepts of freedom and an out-of-date system of regional self-government. The fact that they were able to assert themselves for a time shows, as has been said, that absolutism was not the only political system in harmony with the requirements of the age, but the short duration of their success did prove that, in the long run, an urban-federal form of government was untenable in an age of centralized communities.

The northern states formed a union of cities in quite a different sense from the southern provinces, which possessed just as many and just as great cities as the North but in which the function of the townships underwent a fundamental change with the loss of local self-government. After the defeat of the Revolt, the most influential social element was no longer the urban middle class, as in Holland, but the aristocratic or pseudo-aristocratic upper class dependent on the court. In the South foreign rule led to the victory of court culture over urban middle-class culture, whilst in the North the achievement of national independence meant the preservation of bourgeois culture. It was not, however, the freedom-loving virtues which played the greatest part in the new wave of economic prosperity in Holland, but

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good luck and sheer accident. The favourable maritime situation, which foreordained that this country should play a predominant part in the organization of trade between Northern and Southern Europe, the wars that forced Spain to purchase goods from the enemy, the insolvency of Philip II in 1596, which led to the ruin of the Italian and German bankers and caused Amsterdam to become the centre of the European money market—all these were so many possibilities of enrichment which Holland had only to exploit, not to create. All it owed to its old-fashioned economic system was the fact that the new wealth benefited not the state and a dynasty, but the urban middle class, which was dismembered, as in medieval days, and still thinking along the lines of economic isolation and autonomy. But this class of merchants and industrial employers thereby became the ruling class. And, as happened wherever this class attained influence and power, it oppressed not only the wage-earning class, but also the petty bourgeoisie consisting of independent but destitute craftsmen and small tradesmen. This bourgeoisie, whose social position in Holland was based on wealth and money-making even more exclusively than elsewhere, allowed its economic and political interests to be represented by a special class recruited from its own ranks, the so-called regents. The town councils with their mayors, aldermen and councillors were made up of these regents, and they it was who really exercised the power of the ruling class. As their office was usually inherited from father to son, they possessed more authority from the very outset and enjoyed greater respect than the normal official class. The regents were, to begin with, mostly former merchants living on private means and exercising their office as a hobby, but their sons already studied at the universities of Leiden and Utrecht and prepared themselves, above all by the study of law, for the government posts which they were to take over from their fathers.

The nobles were not completely without influence, especially in the provinces of Gelderland and Overysel, but they were few in number and only a few families kept themselves isolated from urban patrician society. Most of them mixed with the rich bourgeoisie either by marrying into middle-class families or by participation in their business enterprises. The upper middle class itself

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developed into a merchant aristocracy, and the regent families began to adopt a way of life which alienated them more and more from the wider circles of the middle class. They formed the transition from the middle classes to the nobility, and established a continuity in the social hierarchy almost unknown elsewhere. The tension between the military-minded monarchists assembled round the stadtholder, on the one side, and the peace party of the middle class and the antimonarchist aristocracy, on the other, was much greater than any differences between the middle classes and the nobility.²⁶¹ But the real power lay in the hands of the bourgeoisie and was not open to serious threat from any side.

In spite of the constant philandering of the possessing classes with aristocratic tendencies in matters of taste, the middle-class spirit also remained predominant in the world of art and imposed an essentially bourgeois stamp on Dutch painting in the midst of a general European court culture. At the moment when Holland attains its cultural prime, middle-class culture is already on the decline elsewhere;²⁶² in the rest of Europe the middle class does not develop another culture reminiscent of the Dutch until the eighteenth century. Dutch art owes its middle-class character, above all, to the fact that it ceases to be tied to the Church. The works of the Dutch painters are to be seen everywhere except in churches; and the devotional picture is non-existent in the Protestant milieu. Bible stories retain only a relatively modest place alongside secular subjects and are usually treated as genre pictures. Representations of real everyday life are the most popular of all: the picture of manners, the portrait, the landscape, the still life, interiors and architectural views. Whilst the biblical and secular narrative picture remains the predominant form of art in the Catholic countries and in those ruled by absolute monarchs, in Holland subjects that had hitherto been treated as non-essential adjuncts now become absolutely independent. Motifs of everyday life, of landscape and still life form not merely the accessories of biblical, historical and mythological compositions, but acquire an autonomous value of their own; the artist no longer needs an excuse to portray them. And the more direct, obvious and commonplace a motif is, the greater

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is its value for this art. The attitude to the world which is expressed here is without aloofness and based on everyday experience—it regards reality as something that has been conquered and is, therefore, familiar. It is as if this reality were being discovered, taken possession of and settled down in for the first time. What art is most interested in is the possessions of the individual, the family, the community and the nation: rooms and courtyards, the town and its environs, the local landscape and the liberated, regained countryside. But even more typical of Dutch art than the choice of subject-matter is the peculiar naturalism by which it is differentiated not only from the general European baroque, with its heroic attitudes, its austere and often rigid solemnity and its impetuous, exuberant sensualism, but also from all earlier styles based on fidelity to nature. For it is not merely the simple, pious, reverent objectivity of the representation, not merely the endeavour to depict life in its immediacy, in the familiar forms, which everyone can confirm for himself, but the personal experience implicit in its outlook, which gives this painting its special quality of truth. The new middle-class naturalism is a style which attempts not only to make spiritual things visible, but all visible things a spiritual experience. The intimate easel painting, in which this conception of art is embodied, became the characteristic form of the whole of modern middle-class art—no other is such an adequate expression of the bourgeois spirit with its untiring psychological inquisitiveness and its limitations at the same time. It is the result of restrictions connected with the small-scale size, on the one hand, and of the highest possible concentration of spiritual content, on the other. The middle class has no use for big decorations; court standards are out of the question as far as its private needs are concerned; official assignments are relatively rare and insignificant, compared with the exacting requirements of the great courts. The stadtholder residence, based on French models, never develops into a real cultural centre and is also much too small and poor to exert an influence on the development of art. Thus in Holland, painting, the most unassuming of the fine arts, and more especially the cabinet picture, its least pretentious form, becomes the predominant genre.

The fate of art in Holland is, therefore, decided not by the

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Church, not by a monarch, not by a court society, but by a middle class which attains importance more by reason of the great number of its well-to-do members, than by the outstanding wealth of individuals. The private taste of the middle class has never before, not even in the Florence of the early Renaissance, let alone the Athens of the classical period, kept itself so free from all official and public influences, and replaced public by private commissions, so much as here. But even in Holland the demand is not wholly uniform, for beside private customers, official and semi-official employers, the communes, the corporations and civic associations, the orphanages, hospitals and almshouses, play a certain part, even though their artistic influence is comparatively unimportant. The style of the works intended for these buyers proves to be somewhat different from that of the ordinary middle-class painting, if only as a result of the more imposing size of the works commissioned. And although there is no use in Holland for art in the grand style, such as was sought after in France and Italy, even for official purposes, nevertheless, classical-humanistic taste, the tradition of which had never died out completely amongst certain circles in the land of Erasmus, has more influence in official art, in the architecture of the big public buildings, the pictures decorating the council chambers and banqueting-halls, the monuments which the Republic has erected to its deserving heroes, than in the art intended for private people. But even the private middle-class taste in art is by no means entirely uniform; the middle class belongs to different cultural strata of the population and makes different demands on art. The well-educated members of the class brought up on classical literature, who continue the tradition of humanism, favour Italianizing tendencies and develop close contacts with mannerism. In opposition to popular taste, they prefer representations of classical history and mythology, allegories and pastoral pieces, pleasant illustrations of biblical stories and elegant interiors, such as were produced by Cornelis van Poelenburgh, Nicolas Berchem, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Adriaen van der Werff. But not even the taste of the non-intellectual bourgeoisie is perfectly homogeneous. Terborch, Metsu and Netscher obviously work for the most distinguished and richest strata of the bourgeoisie, Pieter de Hooch and

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Vermeer van Delft for a somewhat more unassuming circle, whereas Jan Steen and Nicolas Maes probably have customers in all classes of society.

The unpretentious naturalistic and the classical-humanistic taste are in a state of tension throughout the golden age of Dutch painting. The naturalistic tendency is incomparably more important as regards both the quality and the quantity of the works produced, but the classicistic tendency is preferred by the well-to-do and well-educated circles, and that alone secures greater esteem and a better income. The opposition in Holland between the middle sections of the bourgeoisie, with its more simple way of life and its religious outlook, and the more secular-minded circles, with their classical-humanistic approach, corresponds, as has been noted, to the antagonism between the Puritans and the Cavaliers in England;²⁶³ in both countries the representatives of a simple, serious, practical way of life stand on one side and those of a refined epicureanism, often disguised as idealism, on the other. It must not be forgotten, however, that the Dutch culture of the seventeenth century, unlike the English culture of the Restoration, never entirely renounces its bourgeois character. Nevertheless, even in Holland a gradual approximation of middle-class taste to the more fastidious conception of art is to be observed; the process is in harmony with the whole tendency towards a more aristocratic mode of life which makes itself felt everywhere in the second half of the century. The fact that Rembrandt is passed over, when the decoration for the Town Hall in Amsterdam is commissioned, is symptomatic; there is a turning away not merely from Rembrandt but from naturalism as well,²⁶⁴ and classicistic academicism with its professors and epigones is now triumphant even in Holland. The new undemocratic spirit is also expressed, for example, in the fact that, as Riegl has noted, the big group portraits representing complete Civil Guard groups come to an end, and portraits are made only of the officers of these groups.²⁶⁵

The question as to how far the different cultural strata in Holland were able to judge the value of their painters is one of the most difficult problems in the history of art. The feeling for artistic quality was certainly not always in accordance with the

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general level of education, otherwise Vondel, the greatest Dutch poet, would hardly have placed a Flinck higher than a Rembrandt. Even at that time there were, of course, people who knew exactly how great a painter Rembrandt was, but they are no more to be identified with the humanistically educated literati than they are to be sought in the broad ranks of the middle class; they were probably, like Rembrandt's own friends, preachers, rabbis, doctors, artists, high officials, in a word, men from the most diverse circles of the cultured middle class, and, also like Rembrandt's friends, not very numerous. The taste of the middle and petty bourgeoisie, who formed the majority of the public interested in art, was by no means very developed, and recognized hardly any criterion of artistic quality other than resemblance. Incidentally, one must not assume that these people always bought pictures in accordance with their own taste; usually they were, no doubt, guided by what was popular in the higher circles of society, just as these circles again allowed themselves to be influenced by the artistic outlook of the intellectual élite with its classical-humanistic education. The demand from a naïve, unpretentious public was a great advantage for the artist, to start with, although later on it became just as great a danger. It allowed them to work freely, according to their own ideas, without having to take the wishes of individual customers into consideration; later on, however, this freedom led to disastrous over-production as a result of anarchic conditions on the market.

In the seventeenth century many people in Holland came into money that could not always be invested advantageously, owing to the over-abundance of capital, and was often not enough to enable them to make very substantial purchases. The buying of articles of furniture and decoration, especially pictures, became a popular form of investment in which even comparatively poor people could participate. They bought pictures, above all, because there was nothing else to buy, but also because other people, including better-placed people, bought pictures, because pictures looked well in the home and gave an impression of respectability and, finally, because it was possible to sell them again. Certainly, the least decisive reason why they bought them was to satisfy their thirst for beauty. It may well have often happened that

they kept the pictures, if they did not need the money invested, and that their children then had a genuine joy in the beauty of these pictures. Thus it probably followed that what was originally a modest property developed in the second and third generation into real art-collections, such as were to be found throughout the country and even in relatively unpretentious circles. In view of the increasing affluence of the population, there was perhaps in fact no single middle-class house without its paintings; but when it is said that in Holland everybody 'from the richest patrician to the poorest peasant' owned pictures, the reference to the 'poorest peasant' can hardly be accurate, and even if the richer peasant did buy pictures, he did so for a different purpose and he looked at the pictures with different eyes than did the 'richest patrician'.

John Evelyn, the art patron and diarist, reports in his memoirs on the lively trade in pictures, and even in good pictures, which he observed at the Rotterdam fair in 1641. There were, as he remarks, very many pictures and they were mostly very cheap. The buyers were largely petty bourgeois and peasants, and amongst the latter there are said to have been some who owned pictures worth two to three thousand pounds; though they sold their pictures again and at a good profit.²⁶⁶ Under the influence of the boom, which was the result of the general wave of speculation on the art market, such a vast quantity of pictures came into existence in Holland after 1620 that, in spite of the great demand, there was a state of over-production which led to a very serious situation for the artists.²⁶⁷ At the outset, however, painting must have guaranteed a good income, otherwise there is no explanation for the inundation of the profession. We know that, as early as the sixteenth century, the production was very great in Antwerp, which exported pictures on a considerable scale. There are said to have been three hundred masters busy with painting and the graphic arts around 1560, when the city had only 169 bakers and 78 butchers.²⁶⁸ Mass production, therefore, does not begin for the first time in the seventeenth century, nor in the northern provinces; the only new feature here is that production is based in the main on the home market, and that a serious crisis arises in artistic life when the public is no longer able to accept the goods. At any rate, it happens for the first time

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in the history of Western art that we are able to establish the existence of a surplus of artists and of a proletariat in the art world.²⁶⁹ The dissolution of the guilds and the fact that artistic production ceases to be regulated by a court or by the state allow the boom on the art market to degenerate into a state of fierce competition, to which the most individual and most original talents fall victim. There were artists living in cramped circumstances in earlier times, but there were none in actual want. The financial troubles of the Rembrandts and the Hals are a concomitant of that economic freedom and anarchy in the realm of art, which now comes on the scene for the first time and still controls the art market today. Here are the beginnings, too, of the social uprooting of the artist and the uncertainty of his existence, which now seems to be superfluous in view of the unnecessary profusion of what he produces. The Dutch painters lived mostly in such miserable circumstances that many of the greatest of them were forced to turn to another source of income outside the artistic profession. Thus van Goyen traded in tulips, Hobbema was employed as a tax-collector, van de Velde was the proprietor of a linen business, Jan Steen and Aert van der Velde were inn-keepers. The poverty of the painters seems indeed to have been the greater the more important they were. Rembrandt still had at least some days of prosperity, but Hals was never particularly popular and never realized the prices which were paid, for example, for the portraits of a van der Helst. Not only Rembrandt and Hals, but also Vermeer, the third leading painter in Holland, had to fight against material worries. And the other two greatest painters of the country, Pieter de Hooch and Jacob van Ruysdael, were also not very highly esteemed by their contemporaries and by no means among the artists leading a comfortable life.²⁷⁰ This epic of Dutch painting is not complete unless one adds that Hobbema had to give up painting in the best years of his life.

The beginnings of the Dutch fine art trade go back to the fifteenth century, and are connected with the export of Dutch miniatures, Flemish gobelins and devotional pictures from Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent and Brussels to Paris.²⁷¹ But the fine art trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is still mostly in the hands of the artists themselves, who trade not only in their own

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but also in works from extraneous sources. The booksellers and the publishers of engravings already trade in paintings from a very early date; they are soon joined by the dealers in second-hand goods and by jewellers as well as frame-makers and inn-keepers.²⁷² The restrictions which are imposed on the fine art trade by the painters' guilds in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries show that the art market already has to contend with a surplus of goods and that there are too many 'art dealers'. Individual towns protect themselves against the import trade and unruly street hawking and only allow persons belonging to a painters' guild to sell pictures. But this measure does not differentiate between a painter and a dealer, and is not intended to limit the pursuit of the art trade to artists; it is merely directed to protecting the home market.²⁷³ A painter spends many years as an apprentice; during this time he cannot earn money from his own work, since everything he paints belongs, according to guild regulations, to his master. Under these circumstances nothing is more obvious than to keep one's head above water by becoming an art dealer. To begin with, the artist buys and sells principally engravings, copies, work done by students, hence cheap goods. But the painters who become art dealers are not by any means all young and unable to earn their own living; of the older ones David Teniers the Younger and Cornelis de Vos are only the most celebrated. Engravers are often to be found as art dealers—Jerome de Cock, Jan Hermensz de Muller, Geeraard de Jode are the best known names—the decidedly commercial nature of their products induces them instinctively to go in for the picture trade in addition to their own engravings. The development of the art trade into an independent business has a far-reaching influence on modern art life. It leads, above all, to the specialization of painters according to definite genres, since the art dealers ask them again and again for the kind of work that proves to be the most saleable. Thus an almost mechanical division of labour comes about in which one painter restricts himself to the representation of animals, another to the reproduction of landscape backgrounds. The fine art trade standardizes and stabilizes the market; it not only ties down art production to permanent types, but also regulates the otherwise chaotic trade. On the one hand,

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it creates a regular demand, by often stepping into the breach when the private customer fails, and, on the other hand, it informs the artist about the wishes of the public in a much more comprehensive and speedy fashion than he would ever be in a position to do himself. It must be admitted, however, that this mediation of the fine art trade between production and consumption also leads to the artist becoming estranged from the public. People get used to buying what they find in stock at the art dealer's and begin to regard the work of art as just as impersonal a commodity as any other. For his part, the artist again becomes accustomed to working for unknown, impersonal customers, of whom he knows nothing except that they are on the lookout for historical pictures today, whereas yesterday they were still buying genre pictures. The fine art trade also involves the estrangement of the public from contemporary art. The dealers prefer to advertise the art of previous ages, for the simple reason that, as has been rightly said, the products of this art cannot multiply and, therefore, cannot depreciate—they are the object of the least risky speculation.²⁷⁴ The art trade has a disastrous effect on production by the systematic whittling down of prices. The artist becomes more and more dependent on the art dealer for his daily bread, and the dealer finds it increasingly easy to dictate prices to him, the more the public accustoms itself to buying from the dealer rather than ordering direct from the artist. Finally, the art trade floods out the market with copies and forgeries and thereby reduces the value of the originals.

Prices on the art market in Holland were, generally speaking, very low; one could buy a painting for a mere two or three guilders. A good portrait cost sixty guilders, for example, when the price of an ox was ninety.²⁷⁵ Jan Steen once painted three portraits for twenty-seven guilders.²⁷⁶ At the height of his fame, Rembrandt received no more than 1,600 guilders for the 'Night Watch', and van Goyen obtained 600 guilders, the highest price of his life, for his view of the Hague. The case of Isaak van Ostade, who, in 1641, supplied an art dealer with thirteen pictures for twenty-seven guilders, shows the kind of starvation wages with which famous painters had to content themselves.²⁷⁷ In relation to the often exaggeratedly high prices which were paid

for the works of artists who had visited Italy and worked in the Italianizing manner, pictures painted in the native naturalistic style were always very cheap. Frans Hals, van Goyen, Jacob van Ruisdael, Hobbema, Cuyp, Isaak van Ostade, de Hooch, never received high prices.²⁷⁸ In countries with a courtly-aristocratic culture artists were better paid. In neighbouring Flanders, Rubens received much higher payments for his pictures than the most popular Dutch painters. He reckoned on a hundred guilders for a day's work in his best period,²⁷⁹ and he obtained 14,000 francs for his 'Acteon', the highest price ever paid for a picture before the age of Louis XIV.²⁸⁰ Under Louis XIV and Louis XV, the income, above all, of the court painters became stabilized and remained on a comparatively high level; thus Hyacinthe Rigaud, for example, earned on an average 30,000 francs per annum between 1690 and 1730—for the portrait of Louis XIV alone he received 40,000.²⁸¹ On the other hand, Rigaud was an exception even in France, where, incidentally, artists were never so prosperous as writers, who were often really pampered. It is a well-known fact that Boileau led the life of a grand seigneur in his house at Auteuil, and left a fortune in cash of 286,000 francs. As royal historiographer, Racine received a salary of 145,000 francs over a period of ten years; in the course of fifteen years, Molière earned 336,000 francs as theatrical director and actor, and a further 200,000 francs as a writer.²⁸² The difference between the income of a writer and that of an artist is still an expression of the old prejudice against manual labour and the higher valuation of people who have nothing to do with manual crafts. In France even court painters only held the rank of inferior court officials right up to the eighteenth century.²⁸³ Cochin reports that the Duc d'Antin, the successor of Mansart as superintendent, was in the habit of treating the members of the Academy very arrogantly and calling them 'tu'.²⁸⁴ A Le Brun was dealt with differently, of course, and, in any case, the treatment of artists varied very widely from one individual to another.

The relatively small respect that was paid to artists meant that both in France and the Netherlands the profession was taken up exclusively by members of the middle and lower sections of the middle class. Rubens was also an exception in this respect;

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he was the son of a high state official, received the best schooling and ended his social education in the service of the court. Even before he had become the court painter of Archduke Albert, he was in the service of Vincenzo Gonzaga in Mantua, and he remained in close contact with court life and court diplomacy throughout his life. In addition to his brilliant social position, he acquired a princely fortune and ruled over the whole artistic life of his country like a monarch. His organizing abilities played just as great a part in all this as his artistic talent. Without such abilities, it would have been impossible for him to carry out the commissions which poured in on him, and which he always fulfilled to the last detail. He was able to cope with them only by applying the methods of industrial manufacture to the organization of artistic work, by the careful choice of expert collaborators and the rational employment of their time and talents. Compared with his manufacture-like routine, in which the work was strictly subdivided, the Dutch artists' workshops—even Rembrandt's workshop—seem quite patriarchal. It has rightly been pointed out that Rubens' method of working was first made possible by the classical interpretation of the process of artistic creation. The rational organization of artistic work, which is consistently applied for the first time in Raphael's studio, and which makes a fundamental distinction between the conception of the artistic idea and its execution, is based on the notion that the artistic value of a picture is already entirely contained in the cartoon, and that the transcription of the pictorial idea into the ultimate form is only of secondary importance.²⁸⁵ This idealistic conception of art was still absolutely current in the theory and practice of the courtly and classicistic baroque, but it was so no longer in the naturalism of Dutch painting. Here such importance is attached to the manual execution, the pictorial handwriting, the stroke of the brush and every contact of the master's hand with the canvas, that the wish to maintain all this in its original purity imposes limitations on the division of labour from the very outset. Rubens adopts the classicistic conception of artistic creation in that period of his life in which he has the most demands to meet and has to leave the execution of his works mostly to his assistants. It does not find expression until

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after the 'Elevation of the Cross' in Antwerp,²⁸⁶ and disappears again in the last phase of his activity, from which once again more of his own personal work has come down to us.

Rembrandt reaches a stage of development corresponding to the style of Rubens' old age directly after his first period as a portrait painter. From that time onward painting is for him a form of direct personal communication—the ever renewed form of an 'impressionism' which makes reality the creation of the all-conquering, all-possessing eye. Riegl divides the history of art into two great periods: in the first, the primitive period, everything is object; in the second, the present, everything subject. According to this theory, the development between the age of classical antiquity and the baroque is nothing but the gradual transition from the first to the second period, with the Dutch painting of the seventeenth century as the most important turning point on the way to the present situation, in which all objects appear as mere impressions and experiences of the subjective consciousness.²⁸⁷ The artistic radicalism which Rubens achieves at the end of his life did not prejudice his public reputation, whereas the same radicalism cost Rembrandt everything he had to lose. The decline begins after the completion of the 'Night Watch' in 1642, although the picture itself was not an absolute failure.²⁸⁸ Between 1642 and 1656 Rembrandt is not yet out of work, but his connections with the rich bourgeoisie are beginning to loosen and break up. There is no noticeable decline in the number of his commissions until the fifties and it is only then that he becomes involved in serious financial difficulties.²⁸⁹ Rembrandt was by no means merely the victim of his own unpractical nature and of the neglected state of his private affairs; his failure was rather the result of the gradual turning of the public to classicism,²⁹⁰ and of his own withdrawal from the solemnities of the baroque, to which he had been by no means averse in his younger days.²⁹¹ The rejection of his 'Claudius Civilis', painted for the Amsterdam Town Hall, is the first sign of the modern crisis in art. Rembrandt was its first great victim. No earlier age could have moulded him into what he became, but no other would have allowed him to go under in this way. In a conservative courtly culture an artist of his kind would perhaps never

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have made a name for himself at all, but once recognized, he would probably have been able to hold his own better than in liberal middle-class Holland where he was allowed to develop in freedom, but which broke him when he refused to submit any longer. The spiritual existence of the artist is always in danger; neither an authoritarian nor a liberal order of society is entirely free from peril for him; the one gives him less freedom, the other less security. There are artists who only feel safe when they are free, but there are also such as can breathe freely only when they are secure. The seventeenth century was, at any rate, one of the periods farthest removed from the ideal of a synthesis of freedom and security.

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I. PREHISTORIC TIMES

1. This antithesis also forms the background of the discussion, of fundamental importance for archaeology, in which ALOIS RIEGL (*Stilfragen*, 1893) examines Semper's doctrine that art takes its rise from the spirit of technics. For GOTTFRIED SEMPER (*Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten*, 1860) art is no more than a by-product of craft and the quintessence of those decorative forms which result from the individual quality of the material, from the methods according to which it is treated and the practical purpose for which the object to be produced is intended. In opposition to this view, Riegl emphasizes that all art, even ornamental art, has a naturalistic imitative origin, and the geometrically stylized forms in no way stand at the beginning of the history of art, but are a comparatively late phenomenon, the creation of an already highly cultivated artistic feeling. As the result of his investigations, he opposes to the mechanistic-materialistic theory propounded by Semper, which he calls 'the transfer of Darwinism to a field of cultural life', his own doctrine based on 'art-creating thought', according to which artistic forms by no means simply follow the dictates of the raw material and the tool, but are found and achieved precisely in the struggle of the purposive 'artistic intention' (*Kunstwollen*) against these material conditions. The methodical idea which Riegl here introduces in his discussion of the dialectic of the mental and the material, of the content and the means of expression, of the will and the substratum of the will, and with which he essentially supplements Semper's theory, even if he does not entirely invalidate it, is of basic significance for the whole theory of art.

The adherence to one or the other of the two ideologically divided schools of thought finds expression everywhere in the archaeological theorizing of individual scholars. ALEXANDER CONZE ('Zur Gesch. der Aufänge griechischer Kunst', *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie*, 1870, 1873.—*Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie*, 1896.—*Ursprung der bildenden Kunst*, 1897), JULIUS LANGE (*Darstellungen des Menschen in der älteren griech. Kunst*, 1899), EMMANUEL LOEWY (*Die Naturwiedergabe in der älteren griech. Kunst*, 1900), WILHELM WUNDT (*Elemente der Völkerpsychologie*, 1912), KARL LAMPRECHT (*Bericht ueber den Berliner Kongress fuer Aesthetik und allg. Kunstwiss.*, 1913), all tend, as conservative academicians and university teachers, to connect the nature and the beginnings of art with the principles

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of geometric ornamentalism and technical functionalism. And if they do, in fact, like Loewy or Conze in his later period, admit the priority of naturalism, they attempt, nevertheless, to limit the significance of this admission by trying to prove the existence even in the monuments of primitive naturalism of the most important stylistic characteristics of so-called 'archaic' art, such as frontality, the lack of perspective and spatial depth, the forgoing of group formations and the integration of the pictorial elements.—ERNST GROSSE (*Die Anfänge der Kunst*, 1894), SALOMON REINACH (*Répertoire de l'art quaternaire*, 1913.—'La Sculpture en Europe', *L'Anthropologie*, V-VII, 1894-6), HENRI BREUIL (*La Caverne d'Altamira*, 1906.—'L'Age des peintures d'Altamira', *Revue préhistorique*, 1906, I, pp. 237-49) and his followers, G. H. LUQUET ('Les Origines de l'art figuré', *Jahrb. fuer praehist. u. ethnogr. Kunst*, 1926, pp. 1 ff.—*L'Art primitif*, 1930.—'Le Réalisme dans l'art paléolithique', *L'Anthropologie*, 1923, XXXIII, pp. 17-48), HUGO OBERMAIER (*El hombre fósil*, 1916.—*Urgeschichte der Menschheit*, 1931.—*Altamira*, 1929), HERBERT KUEHN (*Kunst und Kultur der Vorzeit Europas*, 1929.—*Die Kunst der Primitiven*, 1923), M. C. BURKITT (*Prehistory*, 1921.—*The Old Stone Age*, 1933), V. GORDON CHILDE (*Man Makes Himself*, 1936), recognize, on the other hand, without reserve, the primacy of naturalistic art and stress precisely the 'unarchaic' tendency in it, its absolute naturalness and vitality.

2. ADAMA VAN SCHELTEMA (*Die Kunst unserer Vorzeit*, 1936) is perhaps in the most difficult situation of all, since ideologically he is one of the most reactionary but in matters of scholarship one of the rather competent archaeologists.

3. E. B. TYLOR: *Primitive Culture*, 1913, I, p. 424.

4. LÉVY-BRUHL: *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, 1910, p. 42.

5. WALTER BENJAMIN: 'L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée', *Zeitschrift fuer Sozialforschung*, 1936, V, p. 45.

6. On the interpretation of Palaeolithic art as magic see H. OBERMAIER in *Reallexikon der Vorgesch.*, 1926, VII, p. 145, and *Altamira*, pp. 19-20.—H. OBERMAIER-H. KUEHN: *Bushman Art*, 1930, p. 57.—H. KUEHN: *Kunst und Kultur der Vorzeit*, pp. 457-75.—M. C. BURKITT: *Prehistory*, pp. 309-13.

7. ALFRED VIERKANDT: 'Die Anfänge der Kunst', *Globus*, 1907.—K. BETH: *Religion und Magie*, 2nd edit., 1927.

8. G. H. LUQUET: 'Les Origines de l'art figuré', *IPEK*, 1926.

9. CARL SCHUCHARDT: *Alteuropa*, 1926, p. 62.

10. GORDON CHILDE: *Man Makes Himself*, p. 80.

11. KARL BUECHER: *Die Entstehung der Volkswirtschaft*, I, 1919, p. 27.

12. HERBERT KUEHN has dealt in detail with the antithesis of the magical and animistic world-view in relation to art in his *Kunst und Kultur der Vorzeit*, 1929.

13. H. HOERNES-O. MENGHIN: *Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst in Europa*, 3rd edit., 1925, p. 90.

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14. GORDON CHILDE, op. cit., p. 109.
15. HENRI BREUIL: 'Stylisation des dessins à l'âge du renne', *L'Anthropologie*, 1906, VIII, pp. 125 ff.—Cf. M. C. BURKITT: *The Old Stone Age*, pp. 170–3.
16. HEINRICH SCHURTZ: 'Die Anfänge des Landbesitzes', *Zeitschr. fuer Sozialwiss.*, III, 1900.
17. Cf. H. OBERMAIER-H. KUEHN: *Bushman Art*.—H. KUEHN: *Die Kunst der Primitiven*.—HERBERT READ: *Art and Society*, 1936.—L. ADAM: *Primitive Art*, 1940.
18. WILHELM HAUSENSTEIN: *Bild und Gemeinschaft*, 1920. First appeared under the title 'Versuch einer Soziologie der bildenden Kunst' in the *Archiv fuer Sozialwiss. und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 36, 1913.
19. Cf. FR. M. HEICHELHEIM: *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Altertums*, 1938, pp. 23–4.
20. H. OBERMAIER: *Urgeschichte der Menschheit*, 1931, p. 209.—M. C. BURKITT: *The Old Stone Age*, pp. 215–16.
21. HOERNES-MENGHIN, op. cit., p. 574.
22. Ibid., p. 108.
23. Ibid., p. 40.
24. FR. M. HEICHELHEIM, op. cit., pp. 82–3.
25. HOERNES-MENGHIN, op. cit., p. 580.

II. ANCIENT-ORIENTAL URBAN CULTURES

1. Cf. LUDWIG CURTIUS: *Die antike Kunst*, I, 1923, p. 71.
2. J. H. BREASTED: *A History of Egypt*, 1909, p. 102.
3. A. ERMAN: *Life in Ancient Egypt*, 1894, p. 414.
4. ROEDER: 'Aegyptische Kunst'. In Max Ebert's *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, VII, 1926, p. 168.
5. LUDWIG BORCHARDT: *Der Portraetkopf der Koenigin Teje*, 1911.
6. A. ERMAN, loc. cit.
7. Ibid.
8. Cf. TH. VEBLER: *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899, III: 'Conspicuous leisure'.
9. S. R. K. GLANVILLE: *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt*, 1930, p. 33.
10. MAX WEBER: *Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1923, p. 147.
11. Cf. W. M. FLINDERS PETRIE: *Social Life in Ancient Egypt*, 1923, p. 27.
12. H. SCHAEFER: *Von aegyptischer Kunst*, 1930, 3rd edit., p. 59.
13. Ibid., p. 68.
14. F. M. HEICHELHEIM: *Wirtschaftsgesch. des Altertums*, 1938, p. 151.
15. L. CURTIUS, loc. cit.
16. Cf. W. SPIEGELBERG: *Gesch. der aegypt. Kunst*, 1903, p. 22.
17. GEORG MISCH: *Gesch. der Autobiographie*, I, 1931, 2nd edit., p. 10.

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18. Cf. W. SPIEGELBERG, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
19. Cf. H. SCHAEFER, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
20. W. HAUSENSTEIN has already pointed out the connection between frontality and the social structure of 'feudal and hieratic' cultures.—*Archiv fuer Sozialwiss. u. Sozialpolit.*, 1913, vol. 36, pp. 759–60.
21. RICHARD THURNWALD: 'Staat und Wirtschaft im alten Aegypten', *Zeitschr. f. Sozialwiss.*, 1901, vol. 4, p. 699.
22. J. H. BREASTED, *op. cit.*, pp. 356, 377.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 378.
24. EDUARD MEYER: 'Die wirtschaftl. Entwicklung des Altertums', *Kleine Schriften*, I, 1924, p. 94.
25. J. H. BREASTED, *op. cit.*, p. 169.
26. FLINDERS PETRIE, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
27. H. SCHAEFER, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
28. ROEDER, *loc. cit.*, p. 168.—Cf. H. SCHAEFER, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
29. O. NEURATH: *Antike Wirtschaftsgesch.*, 1926, 3rd. edit., pp. 12–13.
30. WALTER OTTO: *Kulturgesch. des Altertums*, 1925, p. 27.
31. ECKHARD UNGER: 'Vorderasiatische Kunst'. In Max Ebert's *Reallexikon der Vorgeschichte*, VII, 1926, p. 171.
32. BRUNO MEISSNER: *Babylonien und Assyrien*, I, 1920, p. 274.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
34. G. GLOTZ: *La Civilisation égéenne*, 1923, pp. 162–4.
35. H. HOERNES-O. MENGHIN: *Urgeschichte der bildenden Kunst*, 1925, p. 391.
36. G. RODENWALDT: *Die Kunst der Antike*, 1927, pp. 14–15.
37. L. CURTIUS sees in Cretan art 'the first revelation of a new European spirit, which . . . differs, with its passionate mobility, in the sharpest possible manner from Oriental art', *Die antike Kunst*, II, p. 56.
38. Cf. G. KARO: *Die Schachtgräber von Mykenai*, 1930, p. 288.—G. A. S. SNIJDER: *Kretische Kunst*, 1936, pp. 47, 119.
39. Cf. D. G. HOGARTH: *The Twilight of History*, 1926, p. 8.
40. HOERNES-MENGHIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 378, 382.—C. SCHUCHHARDT: *Alteuropa*, 1926, p. 228.
41. G. RODENWALDT: 'Nordischer Einfluss im Mykenischen?' *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archaeolog. Instit. Beiblatt*, XXXV, 1920, p. 13.
42. On the questionableness of Cretan taste cf. G. GLOTZ, *op. cit.*, p. 354.—A. R. BURN: *Minoans, Philistines and Greeks*, 1930, p. 24.

III. GREECE AND ROME

1. H. M. CHADWICK: *The Heroic Age*, 1912, pp. 450 ff.—A. R. BURN: *The World of Hesiod*, 1936, pp. 8 ff.
2. H. M. CHADWICK, *op. cit.*, pp. 347–8, 365.—GEORGE THOMSON: *Aeschylus and Athens*, 1941, p. 62.
3. 'There is one thing which the best prefer to everything else: the

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eternal fame to transitory things'—as Heraclitus still says. Fragment No. 29 in H. DIELS: *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, I, 1934, 5th edit., p. 157.

3a. Incidentally, even in prehistoric times, not all genres seem to have been performed chorically.

4. H. M. CHADWICK, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

5. W. SCHMID-O. STAEHLIN: 'Gesch. der griech. Lit.', I, 1, 1929, p. 59. In I. Mueller's *Handbuch der Altertumswiss.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 664.

8. Cf. O. NEURATH: *Antike Wirtschaftsgesch.*, 1926, 3rd edit., p. 24.

9. SCHMID-STAEHLIN, *op. cit.*, I, 1, p. 157.

10. Cf. HERMANN REICH: *Der Mimos*, 1903, I, p. 547.

11. E. A. GARDNER: 'Early Athens'. In *The Cambridge Ancient History*, III, 1929, p. 585.

12. G. THOMSON refers to V. GROENBECK: *Culture of the Teutons*, 1931, in his exposition of this theory (*op. cit.*, p. 45).

13. H. M. CHADWICK, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

15. A. R. BURN: *Minoans, Philistines and Greeks*, 1930, p. 200.

16. PAUL CAUER: *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*, 1909, 2nd edit., pp. 420-3.

17. SCHMID-STAEHLIN, *op. cit.*, I, 1, pp. 79-81.

18. U. v. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF: *Die griech. Lit. des Altertums*, 1912, 3rd edit., p. 17.

19. BERNHARD SCHWEITZER: 'Untersuchungen zur Chronologie und Geschichte der geometrischen Stile in Griechenland'. *Athen. Mitt.*, XLIII, 1918, p. 112.

20. Cf. W. JAEGER: *Paideia. The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 1939, p. 184.

21. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF: *Einleitung in die griech. Tragödie*, 1921, p. 105.

22. Cf. EDGAR ZILSEL: *Die Entstehung des Geniebegriffs*, 1926, p. 19.

23. J. BURCKHARDT: *Griech. Kulturgesch.*, IV, 1902, p. 115.

24. LUDWIG CURTIUS thinks that, from the sixth century, 'the inscription placed on the base of every important piece of Greek sculpture mentioned, apart from the name of the patron and the name of the god to whom the statue was dedicated . . . the name or names of the artists', *Die Antike Kunst*, II, 1, 1938, p. 246.

25. W. JAEGER, *op. cit.*, p. 230.—Cf. C. M. BOWRA: 'Sociological Remarks on Greek Poetry', *Zeitschr. f. Sozialforsch.*, 1937, VI, p. 393.

26. B. SCHWEITZER: *Der bildende Kuenstler und der Begriff des Kuenstlerischen in der Antike*, 1925, p. 45.

27. T. B. L. WEBSTER: *Greek Art and Literature 530-400 B.C.*, 1939—thinks that sensualism is the particular stylistic trend of the court of Polycrates, intellectualism that of the court of Pisistratus.

28. PERIEGESIS, V, 21.

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29. J. D. BEAZLEY: 'Early Greek Art', *Cambridge Ancient Hist.*, IV, 1926, p. 589.
30. G. THOMSON, op. cit., p. 353.
31. GILBERT MURRAY: *A History of Ancient Greek Lit.*, 1937, p. 279.
32. VICTOR EHRENBERG: *The People of Aristophanes. A Sociology of Old Attic Comedy*, 1943—does not succeed, either, in making the poet a friend of democracy.
33. Cf. ADOLF ROEMER: 'Ueber den literarisch-aesthetischen Bildungsstand des attischen Theaterpublikums', *Abh. der philos.-philol. Klasse der kgl. bayr. Akad. d. Wiss.*, 1905, vol. 22.
34. Cf. J. HARRISON: *Ancient Art and Ritual*, 1913, p. 165.
35. W. JAEGER, op. cit., p. 285.
36. Ibid., p. 342.
37. M. POHLENZ: *Die griech. Tragödie*, 1950, I, pp. 256, 456.
38. G. THOMSON, op. cit., p. 347.
39. W. JAEGER, op. cit., p. 345.
40. The term comes from ALFRED WEBER: 'Die Not der geistigen Arbeiter'. In *Schriften des Vereins fuer Sozialpolitik*, 1920.
41. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF: *Griechische Tragödien*, II, 1907, 5th edit., p. 137.
42. T. B. L. WEBSTER: *Introduction to Sophocles*, 1936, p. 41.
43. G. MURRAY, op. cit., p. 253.
44. E. ZILSEL, op. cit., pp. 14–15.
45. Ibid., p. 78.
46. Cf. K. MANNHEIM: 'Wissenssoziologie'. In Vierkandt's *Handwoerterbuch der Soziologie*, 1931, p. 672.
- 46a. P.-M. SCHUHL: *Platon et l'art de son temps*, 1933, pp. 14, 21.
47. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF: *Einleitung in die griech. Tragödie*, 1921, p. 111.
48. L. WHIBLEY: *A Companion to Greek Studies*, 1931, p. 301.
49. K. J. BELOCH: *Griech. Gesch.*, 1925, 2nd edit., IV, 1, pp. 323–5.—M. ROSTOVITZ: *The Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, 1941, I, pp. 206–7; II, pp. 618, 755.
50. O. NEURATH, op. cit., p. 49.
51. JUL. KAERST: *Gesch. des Hellenismus*, II, 2nd edit., 1926, pp. 166–7.
52. Ibid., p. 163.
53. GEORG. MISCH: *Gesch. der Autobiographie*, I, 1931, 2nd edit., pp. 96 ff.
54. Ibid., pp. 105, 113, 179.
55. WILAMOWITZ-MOELLENDORFF: *Die griech. Lit.*, pp. 185–7.
56. E. BETHE: 'Die griech. Poesie'. In GERCKE-NORDEN, *Einf. in die Altertumswiss.*, I, 3, 1924, p. 38.
57. The word in the sense intended here comes from Max Weber.
58. FRANZ WICKHOFF: *Römische Kunst*, 1912, p. 23.
- 58a. ARNOLD SCHÖBER: 'Zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der provinzial-

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- roemischen Kunst', *Jahresber. des Oesterr. Archaeolog. Inst.*, 1930, XXVI, pp. 49-51.—*Silvio Ferri: Arte romana sul Reno*, 1931, p. 268.
- 58b. Cf. GUIDO KASCHNITZ-WEINBERG: 'Stud. zur etrusk. u. fruehroem. Portraetkunst', *Mitt. des Dtschen Arch. Inst. Roem. Abt.*, vol. XLI, 1926, pp. 178 ff.
- 58c. TH. MOMMSEN: *Roemisches Staatsrecht*, 1887, 3rd edit., I, p. 442; III, p. 465.
- 58d. A. ZADOKS-JITTA: *Ancestral Portraiture in Rome*, 1932, p. 34.
59. HERBERT KOCH: 'Spaetantike Kunst'. In *Probleme der Spaetantike*. Vortraege auf dem 17. Deutschen Historikertag, 1930, pp. 41-2.
60. G. RODENWALDT: *Die Kunst der Antike*, 1927, p. 67.
61. TH. BIRT: *Zur Kulturgesch. Roms*, 1917, 3rd edit., p. 138.
62. *Ibid.*
63. F. WICKHOFF, op. cit., pass., especially pp. 14-16.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Cf. MAX DVOŘÁK: 'Katakombenmalereien. Anfaenge der christlichen Kunst'. In *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*, 1924, pp. 16-17.
66. On the expressionism of late antiquity: RUD. KAUTZSCH: *Die bildende Kunst der Gegenwart und die Kunst der sinkenden Antike*, 1920.
67. Cf. H. KOCH, op. cit., pp. 49, 53.—G. RODENWALDT, op. cit., p. 87.—M. DVOŘÁK, op. cit., p. 21.
68. MAX WEBER: 'Die sozialen Gruende des Untergangs der antiken Kultur'. In *Ges. Aufsaeetze zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgesch.*, 1924, pp. 307-8.
69. TH. VEBLEN: *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, 1899.
70. E. ZILSEL, op. cit., p. 35.
71. VEBLEN, op. cit., p. 36.
72. J. BURCKHARDT, op. cit., IV, pp. 125-6.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-4.
74. B. SCHWEITZER: *Der bildende Kuenstler*, p. 47.
75. J. P. MAHAFFY: *Social Life in Greece from Homer to Meander*, 1888, p. 439.
76. SCHWEITZER: *Der bild. Kuenstler*, pp. 60, 124 ff.
77. *Enneades*, V, 8, 9.
78. O. NEURATH, op. cit., p. 68.
79. E. ZILSEL, op. cit., p. 26.
80. LACTANTIUS: *Div. Inst.*, II, 2, 14.
81. PLUTARCH: *Pericles*, 2, 1.
82. L. FRIEDLAENDER: *Darstellungen aus der Sittengesch. Roms*, III, 10th edit., 1923, p. 103.—B. SCHWEITZER: *Der bild. Kuenstler*, p. 30.

IV. THE MIDDLE AGES

1. MAX DVOŘÁK: 'Katakombenmalereien. Die Aufaenge der christlichen Kunst'. In *Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte*, 1924.

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2. OSKAR WULFF: 'Die umgekehrte Perspektive und die Niedersicht'. In *Kunstwissenschaftliche Beitræge A. Schmarsow gewidmet*, 1907.—*Die Kunst des Kindes*, 1927.
3. WILHELM NEUSS: *Die Kunst der alten Christen*, 1926, pp. 117–18.—Illustration in H. PIERCE–R. TYLER: *L'Art byzantin*, II, 1934, plate 143.
4. Cf. E. V. GARGER: 'Ueber Wertungsschwierigkeiten bei mittelalterlicher Kunst'. *Kritische Berichte zur kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur*, 1932–3, p. 104.
5. M. DVOŘÁK: *Idealismus und Naturalismus i. d. got. Skulptur u. Malerei*, 1918, p. 32. Here in connection with later Carolingian art.
6. RUDOLF KOEMSTEDT: *Vormittelalterliche Malerei*, 1929, passim. Cf. for the following, pp. 14–18 and 20–3.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
8. HENRI PIRENNE: 'Le mouvement économique et social'. In *Histoire du Moyen Age*, edited by G. Glotz, VIII, 1933, p. 20.
9. STEVEN RUNCIMAN: *Byzantine Civilization*, 1933, p. 204.
10. LUJO BRETANO: 'Die byzantinische Volkswirtschaft', *Schmoller's Jahrbuch*, 1917, 41st year, Vol. 2, p. 29.
11. *Georg Ostrogorsky*: 'Die wirtsch. u. soz. Entwicklungsgrundlagen des byz. Reiches', *Vierteljahrsschr. f. Sozial- u. Wirtschaftsgesch.*, 1929, XXII, p. 134.
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V. RENAISSANCE, MANNERISM, BAROQUE

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